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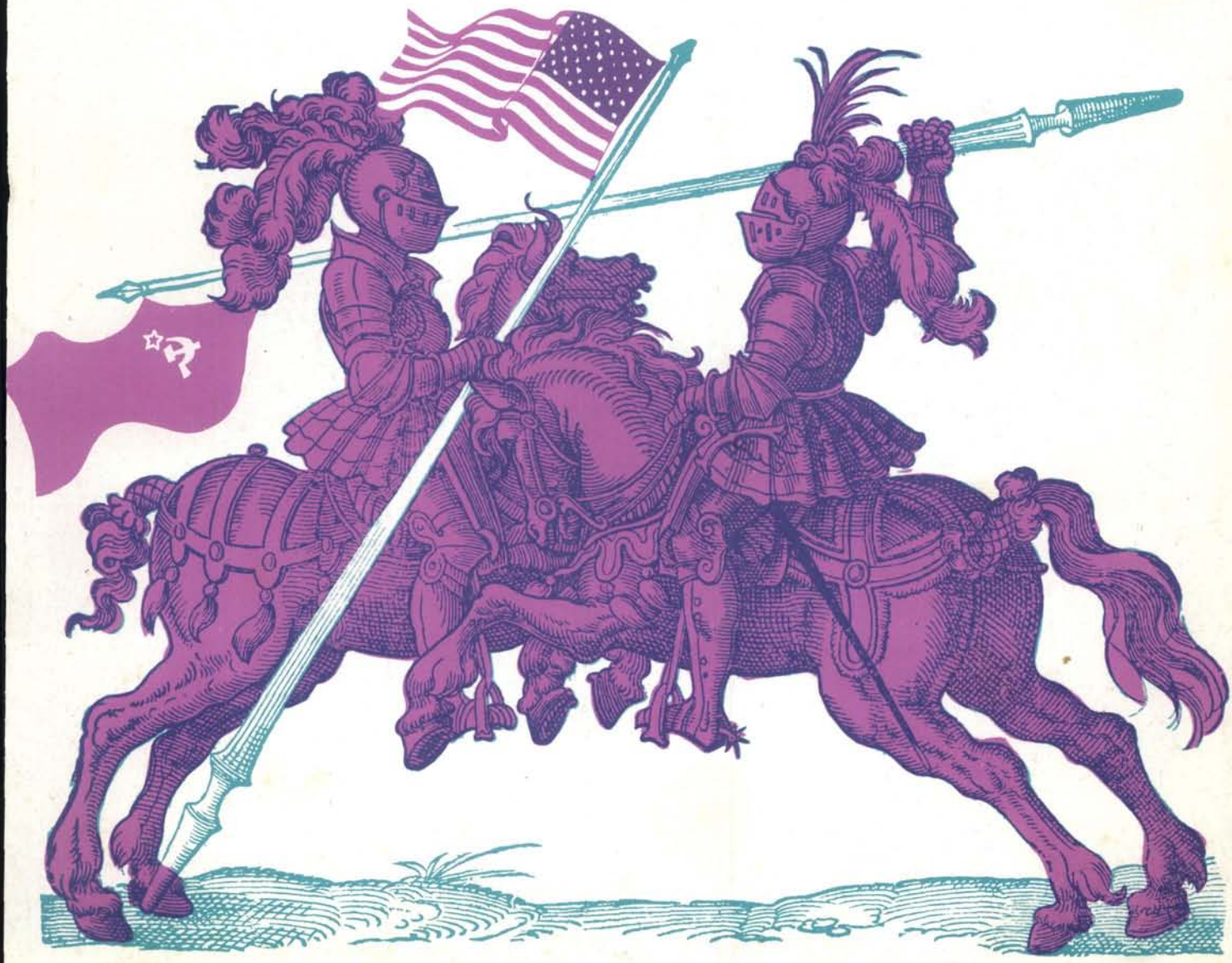

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Marxism Today

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FOCUS

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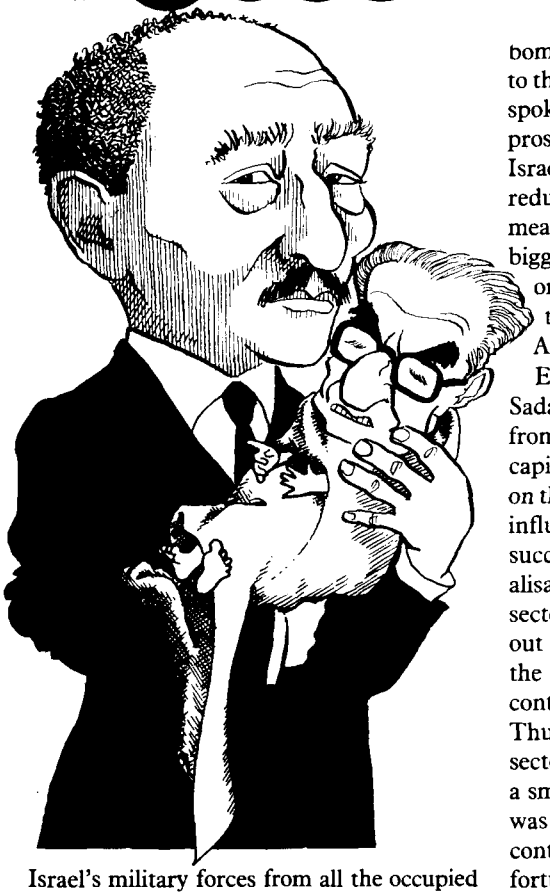
Anwar el Sadat took his first steps towards Camp David and the US/Egyptian/Israeli alliance very soon after he succeeded Gamal Abdel Nasser as President of Egypt in October 1970. The reversal of Nasser's foreign policy was heralded in May 1971 by the arrest and imprisonment of a group of prominent political leaders known for their active support of a policy based on friendly relations with the socialist countries. By July 1972, Sadat had expelled from Egypt all the Soviet military technicians, a move rightly understood as a signal that the way was open for Egypt's alignment with US strategy in the Middle East. This became obvious after the October 1973 war. When the ceasefire took place, Egypt had regained only a narrow band of the Israeli-occupied Sinai peninsula, but the effects of even this limited achievement were extremely worrying to the Zionist state whose claim to invincibility in the military field had been shattered. The indecisive outcome of the fighting gave the US State Department its chance to step in.

The aim of Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy after October 1973 was a peace settlement on terms that would meet the needs of American strategy. This meant an initial rapprochement and then a separate peace between Egypt and Israel whose armies, the most powerful in the Middle East, would both become dependent on American assistance and available to defend American interests in the whole region and beyond. The two Sinai disengagement agreements of 1974 and 1975, negotiated under Kissinger's leadership, marked a further American advance. Under the pretext that a watchman over both the Egyptian and Israeli forces was needed, the US installed its own personnel in the Sinai, thus establishing a precedent for the present use of Egypt's air bases by the US air force operating in the Middle East.

Meanwhile, the Geneva Conference set up in October 1973 under United Nations auspices with joint US and Soviet chairmanship, had been adjourned in 1974. It was intended to negotiate a comprehensive Middle East settlement with the participation of all the parties concerned including the representatives of the Palestinian people demanding their right to self-determinaton. Rather than this comprehensive settlement, Sadat's 'peace initiative', ie, his visit to Jerusalem in November 1977, led to a hardening of the American and Israeli positions and to a series of Egyptian capitulations culminatng in the peace treaty signed in Washington in March 1979.

Sadat told the Knesset in November 1977 that Egypt insisted on the withdrawal of



Israel's military forces from all the occupied territories, including the West Bank of the Jordan, the Golan Heights in Syria, the Gaza enclave and the Arab part of Jerusalem; that he would not sign a separate peace treaty; and that he would defend the right of the Palestinians to their own State. Yet while the negotiations were proceeding and then after the signing of the Washington treaty, the Israeli Prime Minister repeatedly declared that he would never accept a withdrawal to Israel's pre-June 1967 borders, or to return the Arab part of Jerusalem to Arab sovereignty, or grant territorial autonomy to Arab Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

The peace treaty of March 1979 in fact upholds these claims, since it acknowledges the right of Israel to station its military forces within the West Bank and Gaza even after the proposed 'Palestinian autonomy' and provides for discussions to determine the form of this 'autonomy' without the participation of the Palestinians themselves. The Palestinians never authorised Sadat to speak on their behalf, let alone make concessions to Israel in their name in contradiction with UN resolutions.

Sadat has so far managed to manoeuvre thanks to two important factors in Egypt's life in the 1970s. There is little doubt that a large part of the Egyptian people aspire to peace and therefore welcomed his initial steps towards reconciliation with Israel. The devastation of the Suez Canal Zone by Israeli bombing and shelling and the enormous cost to the economy were all too apparent when he spoke to the Egyptian people of the era of prosperity which would follow peace with Israel. Few imagined that, instead of a reduction in military expenditure, this peace meant that the Egyptian army would need bigger armaments and more men than ever in order to play its new role as US policeman to defend unpopular regimes in the Arab countries and in Africa.

Equally important for the conduct of Sadat's policy was the support it received from a significant section of the Egyptian capitalist class. Nasser's main achievements on the economic front were the removal of the influence of the big landowners thanks to successive agrarian reforms, and the nationalisation of a large part of the industrial sector. These measures were however carried out without parallel political advance, with the trade unions under tight government control and democratic rights strictly limited. Thus it was inevitable that the large public sector should be exploited to the advantage of a small part of the population. The outcome was the expansion of a class of entrepreneurs, contractors etc, who accumulate immense fortunes without investing in productive projects, while the nationalised industries decline for lack of investments and administrative neglect.

Sadat's response to the disastrous state of the productive sectors and the roaring inflation was the 'open door' policy intended to attract foreign investments. But while it failed to attract significant investments from abroad, rewards for his political line did come from reactionary Arab countries and the US in the form of larger and larger loans, grants and military supplies. For 1980 alone the promised US financial assistance to Egypt is 1,500 million dollars, to be followed by 4,000 million in the next four years.

The enormous debts contracted since 1973 have inevitably been accompanied by foreign interference. In 1976 the International Monetary Fund investigated Egypt's finances and imposed severe restrictions, including the cancellation of state subsidies on essential food items which led to nationwide riots in January 1977. Another IMF agreement signed in 1978 stipulated further restrictions.

Disillusionment with Sadat's policies is now spreading to all classes including the capitalists who had hoped to turn his policies to their own advantage. The opposition remains muzzled but is growing despite more and more repressive laws passed by a National Assembly dominated by Sadat's own party, the National Democratic Party.

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Some of these laws were recently publicly denounced by the Egyptian Bar Association and the Journalists' Union. The Progressive National Unionist Party which claims a membership of 150,000, groups Marxists, Nasserites and other progressive opponents of the regime and remains active despite the banning of its official newspaper. The trade unions affiliated to the PNUP have supported its denunciation of the Washington peace treaty. A recently formed National Front of opponents of the regime is active in Egypt and abroad. Groups of religious fundamentalists, opposed to the Israeli alliance, represent a threat of a different character.

The Sadat regime has survived so far partly because of the lack of a cohesive opposition and partly because of the American money poured into its coffers. The price Sadat has had to pay is complete subservience to the US and the disgrace attached to pro-Americanism in the Middle East.

TALBOT — A NEW NAME IN ANTI-COMMUNISM

Since the takeover by PSA Peugeot-Citroen in August 1978 of Chrysler's European operations, including Chrysler UK, there has been relatively little publicity in the British media about the plans of Europe's new top motor multinational. While all eyes have been on British Leyland, what has George Turnbull, the ex-Leyland manager appointed by PSA to run its British operation, been planning for the newly-named Talbot UK?

Talbot management's attitude to trade unionism shows significant similarities to BL's. Undoubtedly their aim has been to undermine the shop-steward system. Their first step was to offer a mere 5% across-the-board pay increase in 1979, combined with a new company-wide grading scheme, this was sweetened by the offer of parity with Coventry wages for the Scottish workers at Linwood, plus increased overtime and shift premia, which also benefitted Linwood. This effectively split the Combine, with the Coventry workers at Ryton and Stoke bravely going into a difficult strike (half the Stoke workers had not worked more than a couple of full weeks in the first 6 months of 1979). After 14 weeks they were forced to go back on a minor productivity concession. Almost immediately the Company cynically announced the closure of Linwoods's second shift, involving 1200 redundancies and higher targets for the remaining shift. This brought home the lesson of the need for unity at combine level, and the Stoke stewards quickly rejoined the combine they had left a few months before. However, it is undoubtedly management that has been setting the pace in proposals for a new corporate bargaining structure, which must follow from the move to parity. It will take a real organisational effort for the trade unions to overcome the sectional and inter-plant rivalries, and to develop a system of company-wide representation that is accountable and responsive to workers across the company.

It was during the 1979 strike that Turnbull laid the foundations of a new Company Briefing system. Two thousand managers and supervisors were put through courses in communication and hundreds of thousands of pounds spent in developing a company-wide propaganda system. The intention is to pass information down a military-style chain of command, by-passing the shop-steward structure. The assembly tracks are even stopped for a full half-hour so that all workers can attend the briefings. Stoke shop stewards felt that this involved an indirect attack on stewards and advised members that attendance was voluntary; but the company docked non-attenders ½-hour's pay; the issue is not yet resolved.

While Turnbull may be getting his advice on 'communications' from friends at the Industrial Society, he is getting his perspectives and a lot of encouragement from the French managers he meets regularly each week. Peugeot's industrial relations methods have received a lot of publicity in France recently, following the suicide of a young CGT delegate to the giant Sochaux plant's Works Council. Evidence of constant management harassment was raised in the French parliament. Peugeot maintains an individual file on each employee, based on interviews and other information. Marks are given on a one to five scale under ten headings: adaptability, punctuality and reliability, respect for equipment and materials, state of mind and general attitude, security, availability, initiative, sociability, quality of work and rapidity of work. For instance, under 'availability' a person who refuses changes in working hours scores only 1 out of 5, while a person willing to volunteer for anything including being called from home gets 5. Transfers and promotion are based on your points score. Peugeot and Citroen are both hostile to independent trade unionism, and Citroen management in particular has a long history of backing the neofascist Yellow union, renamed the CSL after the murder of a CGT militant in Reims in 1977.

Management's aim in undermining the unions is clearly to enforce that the workforce accept whatever plans are put forward as part of the group's restructuring. PSA likes to talk grandly of their 10-year 'rationalisation' plan, while keeping the details quiet, supposedly not to alert their competitors. In fact, in common with most car firms, they have been forming a network of inter-company links, hedging as many bets as they can in the face of the uncertainties of the continuing world capitalist crisis. Should US finance capital decide to go through with the Chrysler rescue, PSA is ready to go into some joint projects with Chrysler, and thereby will be linked also to Mitsubishi, Chrysler's

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Japanese ally. PSA are also negotiating a technical and licensing deal with Nissan to help their exports to Japan. In Europe they are linked even to their arch-rivals Renault, as well as Volvo, in the jointly-owned Douvrin engine plant. They have strong links with Matra, and arrangements for production of speciality cars and vans with Matra, Chausson, Pininfarina and Lotus. On the commercial vehicle side they are establishing joint production plans with DAF Truck, which is 33⅓ owned by the giant International Harvester, which itself owns Seddon-Atkinson in the UK.

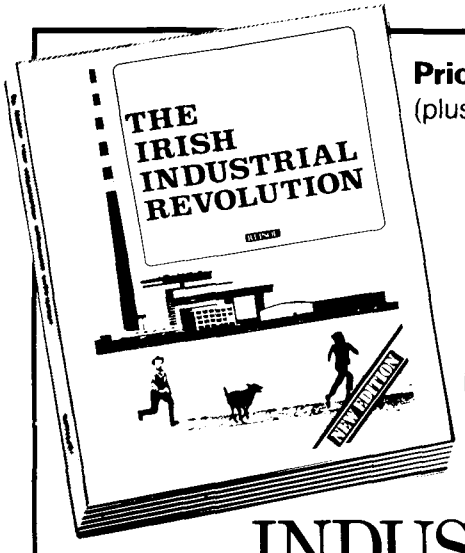
What will actually survive of all these castles in the sand will depend largely on the effects of this year's expected downward lurch of the car market, as part of the general depression, and on whether the hoped-for revival takes place in 1981-4. PSA's plan is to use the scope for rationalisation offered by the possibilities for integration resulting from their takeover of Talbot. PSA bosses have stated in newspaper interviews that of the 45 plants in the group 20 might be expected to close in the next few years.

They intend to do this by integrating the model range within the whole group and developing the standardisation of components across Peugeot-Citroen-Talbot models. For instance, different types and capacities of engine will be developed for the group as a whole, so that each model can be offered in a range of variants. Production of such common components will be pumped, while others can be closed down. Some of this investment is being supplied by the French government, as part of the scheme to create jobs in northern and eastern France, following the steel closures and subsequent riots. But the French unions are well aware that these subsidies are being given under false pretences: as this investment programme proceeds, PSA will be reducing not increasing employment overall, even in France, by closing down other plants, mainly in the Paris region.

The effect on Talbot UK would be to reduce it to a disposable module in the PSA structure. Inevitably, the UK assembly plants will be duplicating models produced in France and Spain, with a sharply reduced local content. The successful Alpine and Horizon models were designed in Coventry but produced almost entirely on the Continent. The 'notchback' variant of the Alpine, launched in May as the Solara, was originally intended to be produced only at Ryton for the whole European market, but PSA decided last year to produce it also at Poissy. A new 2-litre designed in Coventry was delayed by PSA for redesigning to take Peugeot engines, and will be launched on that basis. This trend must mean the rundown or shutdown of independent production capacity for engine, gearbox, foundry and mechanical parts production at the Stoke and Linwood plants, as well as related suppliers, with the consequent loss of thousands of jobs.

PSA's refusal to put any new investment into the UK operation has merely continued Chrysler's policy of milking dry the assets acquired from Rootes. The company's financial position is still crucially dependent on the Iran contract originally negotiated by Rootes, under which the aged Hunter is exported in kit form. Even this is now threatened by the Thatcher government's blind and servile backing of US sanctions against Iran. This would mean 2,000 immediate layoffs in Coventry, with a spread effect in related suppliers of maybe twice that number. Should Iran retaliate by cutting off all links with Talbot and buying car kits or a model for local production on the increasingly cut-throat world car market, this could prove the death-knell for Talbot UK. It could become a mere assembler of cars with less local content than is permitted by many developing countries.

Contributors:
Celine Whittleton, Sol Piccioto



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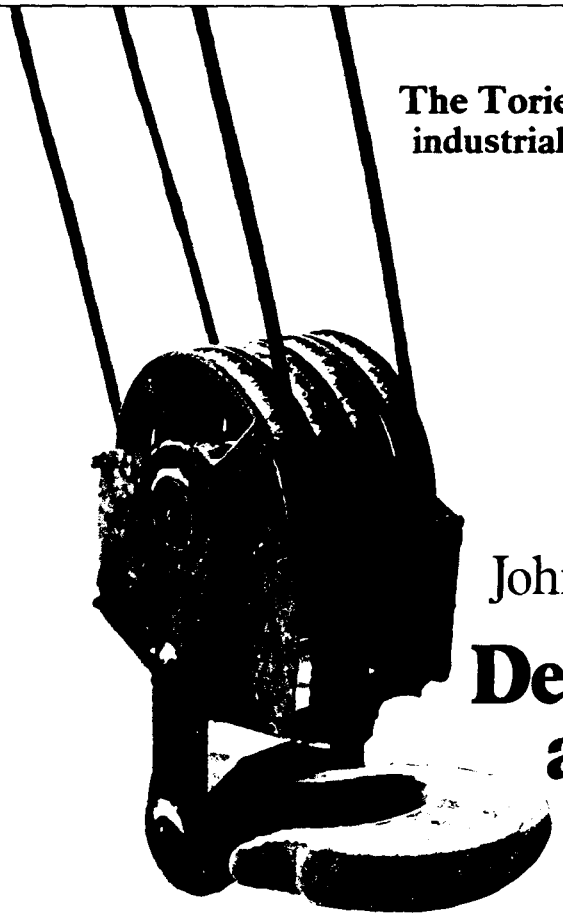

The Tories, far from reversing our industrial decline, are exacerbating it

John Grahl

De-industrialisation and the Tories

The term, 'de-industrialisation' is increasingly used to describe economic decay in Britain.[2] Essentially, it refers to two closely related problems: firstly, the inability of British manufacturing industry to maintain its position in foreign and domestic markets; secondly, the failure to provide industrial employment for the British workforce.

The dramatic pace of de-industrialisation since the Tories returned to office is easy to illustrate. The TUC lists the following redundancies in UK industry announced in just two weeks of February this year.

Date	Company	Location	Jobs Lost
1.2.80.	Dunlop	Birmingham	600
1.2.80.	Courtaulds	Larne Carrickfergus	235
4.2.80.	British Cargo Airlines	Stanstead	50
5.2.80.	National Smokeless Fuels	Manvers, Yorkshire	580
5.2.80.	Tootal	Northampton/London	800
6.2.80.	Weir Group	Sheffield	850
8.2.80.	Stone-Platt	Oldham	850
11.2.80.	SCM	Glasgow	500
11.2.80.	Massey-Ferguson	Liverpool	550
14.2.80.	Pickering Foods	Northern Ireland	300

TUC Economic Review

This process is going to continue. A Treasury official recently told a Commons Committee that the government was reckoning on a 4½% fall in British manufacturing production this year. Officials have been less forthcoming on the consequences of this sort of figure for unemployment.

Historical background

This double failure — to compete internationally and to provide work — has very deep roots. Historians continue to discuss the reasons for Britain's relative decline as an industrial producer, but they are virtually unanimous in tracing it back at least as far as the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Debate continues about the specific weight to be attached to economic, social and cultural factors in accounting for this loss of dynamism in British economic development. However, in view of 'neo-liberal' doctrines of competitive capitalism and the related cult of small businesses among the Thatcherites, it is worth making a simple point. *Britain's economic decline has its origin precisely in the failure of a liberal economic order,* an economy of small businesses almost completely free from legal restraints and bureaucratic interference. The laissez-faire economy of mid-Victorian Britain failed to use science to reshape its technology, lagged behind its rivals in the extension of factory production, and was unable to create and exploit new mass markets for consumer goods.[3]

From Relative to Absolute Decline

The decline discussed so far was *relative*. Britain fell behind the second generation of industrial powers — the US, Germany, Japan. Increasingly, she fell behind the third and fourth generations also, as industrialisation spread through Europe and into parts of Asia and Africa. But this loss of leadership did not mean a decisive halt to British economic development.

The limited but significant reforms of the nineteen forties,

[1] In writing this article, I have benefited considerably from papers by Mike Bleaney, John Fairley and Paul Levine presented to the Economic Committee of the Communist Party.

[2] For example, Agit Singh, 'UK industry and the world economy: a case of de-industrialisation?' *Cambridge Journal of Economics* No 1 1977; Frank Blackaby ed, *De-industrialisation*, Heinemann 1979.

[3] E J Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire*, Penguin, 1969, Chapter 9, 'The Beginnings of Decline'.

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stimulated by the democratic climate of war-time Britain and the first majority Labour government, made for a considerable renovation of our social and economic institutions. On this basis, and in a favourable international economic climate Britain participated in the most rapid period ever of capitalist economic growth.

Nothing in Britain's performance, however, began to compare with the capitalist resurgence of West Europe and Japan. While output and exports grew through the fifties and sixties, Britain's share of both fell continuously. In 1950 the UK accounted for 25.5% of manufactures exported from advanced capitalist countries; by 1960 this had fallen to 16.5%, by 1970 to 10.8% and by 1975 to 9.3%, a level which has been tenuously maintained in the international recession which began in 1974. Similarly, the UK's share of manufacturing output fell continuously, from 9.6% in 1960 to 5.8% in 1975.[4]

The participation of Britain in the long boom of post-war capitalism was uncertain and limited. When that boom began to weaken in the late 1960s and was succeeded by crisis and recession, Britain faced the prospect of complete stagnation, of a relative lack of economic growth giving way to falling production and depression.

We will look briefly at the two most important aspects of this crisis — imports and unemployment.

Import Penetration

Import penetration is not a statistically measurable trend, but a *process*. Over short periods of time we can in fact observe import penetration as a growing share of home markets going to foreign products.

Import penetration no longer merely *retards* British industrial development, it threatens to undermine it

Over a slightly longer period, however, various mechanisms respond to a growing gap between imports and exports. The currency tends to depreciate, cutting home costs, especially wages, relative to those of our competitors. Governments respond to balance of payments problems by deflating the home economy, as they have done eight times since 1952.[5]

While home markets stagnate, those overseas are relatively buoyant. On the basis of lower British wage costs, manufacturers can increase their exports, often by concentrating on less technically sophisticated, more labour intensive products. In this way exports catch up for a while with imports.

But the balance is only temporary. The gap in productivity between Britain and her competitors has not been closed. Rather it has widened. As soon as the home economy begins to expand imports flood in again and the whole cycle is repeated.

The sequence has little to do with neo-classical trade theory, where each country specialises in those industries where it enjoys a given cost advantage. Import penetration means that the cost differentials get wider and wider and the weaker country is driven into an increasingly disadvantageous position. Export pressure from Britain in the nineteenth century did this to foreign industries. Today British industry is on the receiving end.

With the outbreak of a deep and prolonged international crisis the competitive struggle for markets became much more intense. Even continuous and severe deflation throughout the 1970s failed to restore the balance of payments. As a result, import penetration no longer merely *retards* British industrial development, it threatens to undermine it.

The trade figures for 1979 mark a new stage in this decline. Traditionally, in British foreign trade a large deficit on fuel, foodstuffs and raw materials has been more or less balanced by a surplus on services and finance ('invisible trade') and by a substantial surplus on manufactures. Last year the British surplus on trade in manufactures virtually disappeared.

The accident of North Sea Oil, cutting the need for imported fuel, has tended to reduce the deficit. But in effect this means the use of oil revenues to finance the imports which are destroying British industry. Discussion still continues on how best to use these resources; it is not generally recognised that they have already been to a large extent mortgaged simply to accommodate the deterioration in other sectors of the economy. The UK's net imports of oil have been cut from 113 million tonnes in 1975 to 18 million tonnes last year. In spite of this Britain still had an overall deficit of £3 billion on foreign trade.

In this way the gains from the only really dynamic sector of the British economy have already been compromised by the process of industrial decline.[6]

De-industrialisation and Unemployment

Closely related to its failure to meet international competition, in the last fifteen years British industry has been increasingly unable to meet the employment needs of the British working population.

The turning point here was 1966 when employment in Britain reached its highest ever level of almost 23 million. In that year the growing difficulties of world capitalism (signalled by the first post-war recession in West Germany) initiated a period of increasingly intense competition in international markets, while the Wilson government set a pattern by reacting to a foreign exchange crisis with sustained deflation.

Employment in service industries continued to grow after 1966, though at a much slower rate after 1975 when Healey began to cut into public expenditure. The Thatcher cuts have now reversed this growth.

In industrial production, on the other hand, employment has fallen steadily since 1966, a decline which was checked briefly, but not reversed, only in the ill-fated 'Barber boom' of 1972/73. Prior to 1966 employment had already been falling in particular industries: traditional sectors such as textiles, coal and rail transport were shedding labour as a result of competition both from abroad and from more modern industries. (However, we should note that the British aerospace industry lost 40,000 jobs between 1959 and 1966, a sign of approaching difficulties in newer sectors, and a warning against relying on defence orders to sustain high technology production).

After 1966 the loss of industrial employment became general, affecting all major industrial groups without exception.

Decline in Employment 1966-78, Selected Industries[7]

	Thousands	Per Cent
Textiles and leather	257	33.8
Metal manufacture	168	26.8
(of which Iron and Steel)	(136)	(28.3)
Clothing and footwear	118	24.4
Bricks, pottery, glass, cement	68	20.5
All Manufacturing Industries	1,247	14.8
Mining and Quarrying	225	39.8
(of which coalmining)	(216)	(42.4)
Construction	385	24.0
All Industrial Production	1,926	17.5

The above table lists only the largest declines. But since *engineering* is the largest part of manufacture and since engineering skills are

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central to industrial production as a whole, it is worth giving some examples of the decline in this key sector:

Decline in Employment, Selected Engineering Industries 1966-78

	Thousands	Per Cent
Metal working machine tools	24	27.0
Office machinery	16	42.1
Photographic & copying equipment	3	20.0
Electrical machinery	73	35.4
Telegraph and telephone apparatus	20	23.5
Electrical, Mechanical and Instrument Engineering Total	261	12.6

The general decline in industrial employment in this period was therefore rapid, partly as a direct consequence of the competitive weakness of British industry, partly as a result of low levels of demand in home markets. And since the labour force started to grow more rapidly in the seventies, unemployment rose inexorably from a low of 1.4% in 1966 to 6.1% in 1978.

In 1979 the return of a Tory government coincided with a sharp recession in world markets which had still not fully recovered from the crisis of 1973. But even before these events, stagnation and competitive failure in British industry threatened massive unemployment in the nineteen-eighties.

THE TORIES AND ECONOMIC DECLINE

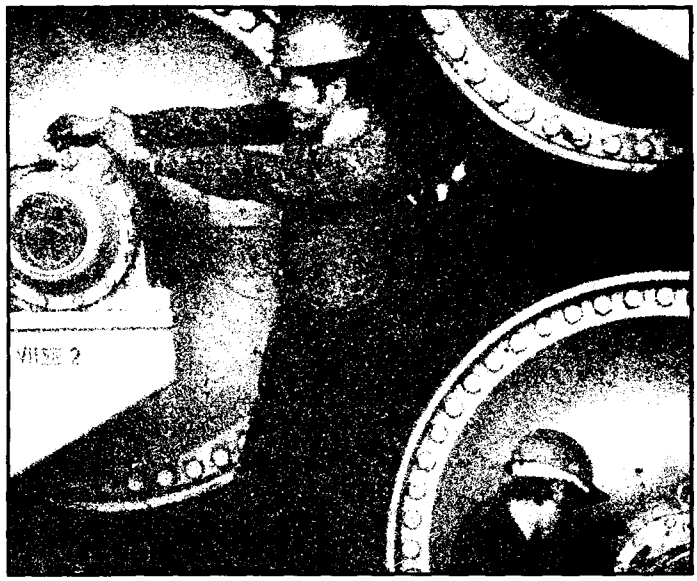
A series of articles in *Marxism Today* have already considered the broader economic and political aspects of Thatcherism.[8] This discussion will not be repeated. In my view, the various writers are quite correct to take the new Tory government very seriously indeed — the *implementation* of their policies, whether or not they succeed in reversing the trend towards economic decline, would itself be a major defeat for the British labour movement. Here I consider a narrower question — the effect of Tory economic policies on the performance of British industry.

The central theme of Thatcherite economics is the control of inflation, which is understood as having resulted from 'socialist' over-spending by Labour and Tory governments alike. If public expenditure can be strictly controlled then there will be an end to the monetary expansion through which government deficits are financed and the price level can be stabilised. At the same time the market 'distortions' permitted by high public expenditure, above all the power of trade unions to win 'excessively' high wage awards will be suppressed. The private sector, freed from inflation and from the 'disincentive' effect of high tax rates, will become more enterprising and dynamic and start to reverse the decline in national fortunes.

The basic tactics following from such notions are deflationary — the growth of demand is restricted by cuts in public spending while monetary restraint is enforced by a credit squeeze. What is new is the extent to which such weapons are being used. Previous governments have all deflated, with reluctance, in response to balance of payments problems. Now the external balance is no longer the main target; rather the medicine is to be repeated in increasing doses, until inflation itself is brought under control, until 'inflationary psychology' is broken.

This deeply fetishistic thinking is already causing concern even among British industrialists. Employers looked to the Thatcher government for a determined attack on the unions, and they have not been disappointed. They are less happy to realise that *industry itself* is the main weapon by which the attack is being carried out.

In the case of BSC for example, the Government applied



indiscriminate financial pressure which panicked management into a confrontation. During the national steel strike, thirteen weeks' output was lost while foreign producers stole BSC's customers and British manufacturing industry was increasingly disrupted. The final settlement was hardly satisfactory for the union side. But since it was still above the rate the unions were demanding before the strike, industrial managements elsewhere could be forgiven for wondering how many such 'victories' they can afford.

Inflation has its real roots in industrial failure and deep-rooted social conflicts. Today's Tories try to cure inflation by disrupting industry and intensifying the conflicts.

Export-led Slump

To see the full perversity of the Tories' monetary policy, however, we must look at it in a bit more detail. The notion is that a severe squeeze on money and credit will reduce inflation — just how is this supposed to work?

According to monetarists one of the main links between the credit squeeze and the price level is the *exchange rate*. High interest rates push up the value of sterling. British goods become dearer in foreign markets, foreign goods cheaper in Britain. In order to meet this more intense competition, British firms are forced to contain the increase in their prices.

This, at least, is the theory. In practice there has been little or no effect on the rate of inflation. On the other hand the high exchange rate and the pressure on British industry are real enough. Interest rates at around 20% and the prospects of North Sea Oil have kept sterling at a level completely unrelated to the actual productivity of British industry. And, since inflation continues to be more rapid in Britain than in other countries, every week that passes makes the exchange rate even more unrealistic.

The consequent decline in British competitiveness has been dramatic. Several measures of British prices relative to those of competing industrial producers are published; they all tell the same

[4] C J F Brown and T D Shariff, 'De-industrialisation: a background paper' in Blackaby, *op cit.*

[5] See the succinct summary of the 'stop-go' cycle in the Cambridge *Economic Policy Review*, 1978, Chapter 1.

[6] These paragraphs are based on a note by Bob Rowthorn for the CP Economic Committee.

[7] *Department of Employment Gazette.*

[8] Mike Bleaney Nov 1979; Andrew Gamble Nov 1979; Martin Jacques Oct 1979; Stuart Hall Feb 1980 etc.

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story. As an example take UK prices measured in dollars:

UK Wholesale Price Index	*1975*	*100.0*
in terms of US Dollars	*1976*	*95.3*
	1977	*110.8*
	1978	*132.8*
	1979	*164.8*

Economic Trends

Thus Tory monetarism does not simply rely on a general credit squeeze — it attacks most severely those sections of British industry which produce for export or are trying to resist import pressure at home, pushing their dollar prices through the roof and narrowing their markets.

The result of an over-valued exchange rate and record interest rates has been a massive deterioration in the balance sheets of industrial firms. In 1978 British industrial and commercial companies had a financial surplus of £541 millions. Last year stagnation and declining competitiveness turned this into a deficit of £4,706 millions.

At this stage the whole policy becomes self-defeating even from a monetarist point of view. The Thatcherites, with plenty of help from Healey and his supporters, have made a complete fetish of public borrowing. But borrowing is borrowing — if manufacturing and trading companies have to find almost five billions in one year they will turn to the banks just as quickly as the public sector does. Thus the Tory reductions in public borrowing threaten to increase the demand for bank credit by private business by an even larger amount — not the way to get that subversive element, the 'money supply' under control.

Of course, if the squeeze is tight enough manufacturing companies will find credit hard to obtain and expensive to finance. They then have to protect their cash flow in other ways, and are indeed beginning to do so — by cutting their investment programmes, by cutting output to run down their stocks and even, the final absurdity of monetarism, by increasing their prices.

The End of Industrial Policy?

While the general economic climate created by the Tories hardly favours an industrial revival, their approach to industrial policy in particular is even more negative.

The industrial policy of previous governments was certainly incoherent. Various steps were taken, on an *ad hoc* basis, as particular aspects of industrial decline came into prominence. Thus investment grants were used, with very limited success, to meet the decay of traditional industry in the regions. When particular industries such as steel got into trouble, some subsidies were forthcoming. Confronted with massive unemployment, the last Labour government resorted to a bewildering variety of 'special measures' through the Manpower Services Commission to slow down redundancies (especially in textiles) and take school-leavers off the unemployment registers. Although the National Enterprise Board never looked like extending public ownership in the way intended by the Labour Party Conference, some funds were channelled through it for industrial reorganisation and investment in new technology.

The sums allocated for such purposes were usually small and the effectiveness of the expenditure open to question. Labour ministers were fond of referring to their 'industrial strategy' but there was very little strategic thought behind the confused assembly of programmes.

Mrs Thatcher and Sir Keith Joseph, however, have a very direct approach to industrial policy which seems certain to simplify matters. They intend to cut the whole lot back by 40% in the next four years. The following table summarises the expenditure estimates published with the budget:

Public Expenditure on Trade, Industry and Employment (£million, 1979 prices)

	1979/80	1980/80	1983/84
Regional and general industrial support	1,008	967	550
Scientific and technological assistance (includes nuclear energy)	282	306	300
Support for aerospace, shipbuilding and steel	202	191	30
Support for other nationalised industries	266	231	100
Trade (negative figures from new treatment of export credits)	13	99	-90
Employment and Training (includes MSC)	1,121	1,123	870
TOTAL:	2,969	2,992	1,760

Although there was little sign in the past that expenditure on industrial policy was achieving its specific objectives, it at least represented a financial contribution to industries suffering from a tight squeeze on profits. For this reason the CBI itself expressed considerable alarm over the size and speed of these cuts.

In the particular sectors such as shipbuilding where government support is being cut back almost to nothing, it is very probable that only accelerated closures and redundancies will relieve the financial pressure. This is certainly what is happening in the steel industry where stringent financial targets are being translated into a loss of 50,000 jobs this year.

The exception to the general cuts is 'Employment and Training' where expenditure will even rise in the coming year. The Government is not prepared to dispense with bodies like the Manpower Services Commission when it is clear that unemployment is on the increase.

The Cult of Small Business

In the last twenty years a pretty wide range of sure-fire remedies has been proposed for Britain's industrial sickness — the National Plan, Selective Employment Tax, the Common Market and so on. The present Government frequently invokes the small businessman as the source of national salvation.

The 'assistance' being offered to small businesses, however, does not indicate any concrete grasp of the contribution they could make to production. The emphasis is rather on the possibilities for personal enrichment in a sector of the economy often marked by unscrupulous commercial practices and the intense exploitation of poorly organised work people.

No steps are being taken to encourage small businesses to raise the technical level of their production, to enter foreign markets, to contribute to the training of the workforce. On the contrary, the 'encouragement' began by lifting legal controls on conditions of employment in small firms — limiting the obligation to make redundancy payments and to secure the jobs of pregnant women workers.

In the budget the same approach was followed up with a wide range of tax concessions: for example, the limit below which sales are exempt from VAT was raised substantially, while large reductions in capital transfer tax make it far easier for small businessmen (and others) to keep their money in the family.

There is little sign that such measures will mobilise enterprise for dynamic development of the British economy. But they will be very effective in reinforcing and legitimising the wealth of small proprietors, regardless of the way in which that wealth is obtained. [9]

A recent study confirms that new companies are not a major source

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of new jobs in Britain. It concludes that 'even raising substantially the rate of new firms formation can have only a minimal impact on manufacturing employment, at least for a decade'.[10]

On the other hand, two hundred big companies now account for almost half of all employment in British manufacturing industry and more than half of total output.[11] The Tories have revamped the monopolies and mergers legislation, causing a certain amount of annoyance to the CBI. But no action contemplated by the Thatcher government will affect the way giant companies dominate the industrial scene. (In fact a major target of the new Monopolies and Mergers Commission is the nationalised sector.)

This point is not made as part of a ritual denunciation of big business, but simply to stress the fact that the overwhelming majority of economically active people in Britain are *employees* in *medium-sized and large companies* and *in the public sector*. Since this will continue to be the case, development of the British economy must depend mainly on how effectively the productive energies of these wage and salary earners are used. To present the small businessman as representative of British industrial problems or their solution is mere escapism.

Small Business in Reality: Textiles and Clothing

If we turn from the heroic 'entrepreneurs' of Tory propaganda to actual small businesses, we find that the Government is in fact doing its best to impede their contribution to production. Small firms were already badly affected by industrial decay and the world crisis. Now the credit squeeze and import penetration are driving them out of business at an unprecedented rate.

A good example is the clothing and textiles sector where there are still a large number of small companies. Less than there used to be, of course: in the EEC as a whole, some 5,000 firms in this sector went out of business in the last ten years — most of them with about 250 to 500 workers. Britain, with the largest industry in Western Europe, took a disproportionate share of this decline. Between 1965 and 1977 over 300,000 jobs disappeared in textiles and clothing.

The crisis itself is bringing about a major shift in the location of the industry: the volume production of relatively unsophisticated products is moving rapidly south towards the Mediterranean; meanwhile the West German and French industries, though also hit badly by overproduction, are investing rapidly in high-speed machinery producing quality goods. Though West Germany lost 1,500 firms in textiles during the seventies, the larger units remaining are now one of the world's biggest markets for modern textile machinery, much of it British.

In Britain itself, by contrast, the crisis has drastically reduced levels of investment. Last year, for instance, the Carrington Viyella group, faced with a severe fall in profits, cut its capital spending by half.

Some measure of protection already exists for the British industry, via the EEC's participation in the international Multi-Fibre Agreement. But this is not enough to limit the import penetration of British markets: in 1979 textile and clothing imports increased by £440 million (25%), exports by only £140 million (9%). By no means all these imports are from developing countries: almost half UK imports of woven fabrics and over half of imported yarns are from developed countries — notably the EEC itself; the major threat to British carpet manufacture has come from the US where subsidised oil makes cheap artificial fibres available.

Last year's VAT increase and record interest rates intensified the pressure as retail outlets tried to protect their own margins by transferring the costs of stock-holding to their suppliers. Lancashire cotton shed 1,260 workers in December alone; the West Yorkshire woollen industry lost 2,000 jobs in December and January. The situation in clothing is illustrated by a statement from the National Union of Tailors and Garment workers: 10% of its members in

menswear were made redundant in the last four months of 1979. In February of this year, the largest clothing company, Tootal, announced a 10% cut-back in employment (attributed to the domestic profits squeeze rather than imports).

To conventional politicians of any party, the emergency might have seemed severe. British textiles and clothing are run-down and inefficient but they still account for 5% of exports and well over half a million jobs. Accelerated decline would make all the problems of economic policy more difficult. Nor is the situation hopeless: a recent EEC report argues that even the clothing industry can survive in North-West Europe, provided there is extensive re-equipment; and a stronger clothing industry would help to sustain textiles.

But for the flesh and blood businessmen of the textile sector, whether large or small, Thatcher's government has few words of comfort. Immediate relief through subsidies is being reduced, while Trade Secretary, John Nott, has announced that there are no plans for further import controls on manufactured goods. (Pressed by MPs for the textile areas he complained about 'exaggerated' tales of de-industrialisation and replied to textile employers that his hands were in any case tied by the EEC.) The clothing industry meanwhile, did organise a little unofficial protection for itself by persuading the big retail chains to cut their imports; the forum for this agreement was provided by the National Economic Development Council, that despised relic of the old consensus politics.[12]

The short-run 'palliatives' of subsidy and protection are therefore ruled out. So also are any strategic interventions, either to restructure and re-equip the industry or to redeploy its manpower.

In the absence of a U-turn in government policy, there only seems to be one way out — a spontaneous regeneration of capitalism in the textile areas, driven forward by dynamic small businessmen who are uninhibited even by the most severe recession in home and foreign markets since the 1930s.

Pillage of the Nationalised Industries

The central confusion in Tory economic thinking is probably its mystified view of the relation between private enterprise and the state. Taking the balance sheets at face value, they interpret public spending as a simple burden on private business.

But if the balance sheets of individual enterprises had been an

[9] This point is made by Mike Bleaney, *Marxism Today*, Nov 1979.

[10] D Storey, 'Job Generation and Small Firms Policy in Britain', Centre for Environmental Studies. Quoted in *Financial Times*.

[11] S Aaronovitch and M C Sawyer, *Big Business*, 1975.

[12] *Financial Times*, various issues, January, February, March 1980.

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adequate representation of economic reality, massive state intervention in capitalist economies would never have come about. In its obsession with financial stability the Government is prejudicing the conditions which make the growth of private companies possible.

A dramatic example is provided by Tory policy towards the nationalised industries. An almost incredible contribution is being demanded from them towards the general reduction in public expenditure — a financial transformation which puts even the cuts in education and social security in the shade.

A dramatic example is provided by Tory policy towards the nationalised industries

In the last financial year public corporations borrowed £2.3 billion over and above their operating profits, in order to maintain their investment programmes. By 1983/84 they will have to repay the government, out of profits, £400 millions — a turn round of almost £3 billion in four years. The whole thing is to be enforced by rigid cash limits on their expenditure.

We get some indication of the material consequences of such a policy by looking at the effect which relatively modest cash limits are already having. With inflation around 20%, public money for nationalised industries is being increased by less than 15%. How will they close the gap?

One relatively straightforward way of closing it has already attracted a lot of interest. Gas prices are going up this year by almost 30%. The same thing will happen next year and the year after — whatever the rate of inflation, gas prices will increase by 10% more.

This could be called passing the buck: the government squeezes British Gas, which duly squeezes its customers — households and businesses.

For nationalised industries less able to jack up prices, the first resort will be cuts in the investment programmes. (This is already happening to British Rail with disastrous consequences for future productivity and revenue.[13]). Now investment by nationalised industries is not a trivial matter. It is some 20% of all fixed investment, and is even larger relative to investment by private industry: in 1978 fixed investment by nationalised industries was £3,428 million, while private investment in *all production and service industries* amounted to only £11,431 million, less than four times the former sum.

It is true that some of the investment by nationalised industries is not very profitable. Rates of return have often been low; frequently very large capital sums have had to be written off. But while these low rates of return explain why such investment is undertaken by the public sector and not by private business, this does not mean that the public investment is unnecessary. (Still less does it mean that the same resources would have been invested elsewhere.)

Rapid investment in publicly owned sectors of transport, energy and communication, pushed ahead despite low rates of return, has built up the infrastructure on which private industry makes its profits. Similarly, the publicly financed reconstruction of industries in trouble, like shipbuilding or BL, works to limit the damage done to other sectors and to the economy as a whole. Thus low rates of return in the nationalised industries do not mean pressure on private profits; often, they are a central factor in maintaining the profitability of private business.

If nationalised industries make sharp cut-backs in their investment programmes in order to meet their cash limits, there will be intensified recession in the industries supplying them with capital goods, while industry as a whole will be faced with increasingly inadequate energy supply, transport and communications.

For those nationalised industries with severe problems, not even reductions in their investment will suffice to meet the cash limits. What happens in such an industry? Sir Keith answers that it 'will be required, as would any private business, to break even by every legitimate means in its power, including cutting overheads, buying better, reducing the stock, disposing of non-central assets and, if necessary, by increased redundancies.'

We will look a little closer at just one of these options, the 'disposition of non-central assets'. It fits in very nicely with another piece of Tory policy, the sale of public property. In the first few months of office the Tories had already determined on an extensive list of such sales[14], including;

BP — shares worth £2 billion.

NEB — £100 million of assets, including the return of ICI and Ferranti to complete private ownership.

British Aerospace — 'about half', for perhaps £150 million (trading profits in 1978, £79 million).

British Airways — up to 49% for up to £150 million (trading profits in 1978, £110 million).

British National Oil Corporation — assets worth £400 million.

The new squeeze on nationalised industries takes this asset-stripping a stage further. Public corporations, faced with rigid cash limits, will in effect be *forced* to sell off profitable parts of their operations, thus narrowing the base for future investments. The process has already begun with BL's sale of MG and by BSC at Shotton. And when someone *has* to sell, the buyer usually gets the best of the bargain

The Retreat from Technical Change

No industrial strategy can succeed unless it speeds up the rate of technical change. Accelerated technical innovation is central to the industrial restructuring now taking place in countries like West Germany, which will largely shape the future international division of labour. Failure to respond will mean increasing problems for Britain and a gradual loss of economic independence.

The reasons for British failure are frequently discussed: an emphasis on science and invention has not been matched by a parallel effort in engineering and in the production of new goods; resources have been misdirected towards grandiose defence and nuclear programmes away from the wider need for industrial modernisation; in a conservative financial climate funds for innovation have often been scarce. Behind such factors lies the general economic stagnation, in which every change in products and processes becomes a threat to established patterns of output and employment.

However, not all the advantages of British industrial experience have yet been dissipated. The British computer industry, for example, is one of the strongest in Europe. Exports grew last year by 32% in the face of intense US competition. (This performance rests on an exceptional degree of state support — the largest manufacturer, ICL, has been nurtured by successive governments and was, indeed, the result of a government-sponsored reconstruction of the industry in the 1960s.)

The Tory retreat from intervention, the increasing financial squeeze on public and private industry, are dislocating British technical development and limiting the scope for modernisation at the very moment when a greatly expanded programme for regeneration is most urgent.

The Tory attitude to the National Enterprise Board will, for example, retard technological developments in industry. The NEB has been putting up risk capital for high-technology firms — in computers, electronics, machine tools, instrumentation, process control. The new guidelines for the NEB and limitations on its capital

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will greatly curtail such investments, while the sale of NEB holdings in strategic high-technology enterprises (Ferranti, ICL, the micro-chip firm INMOS) will weaken its programme of industrial development.

Technical training in general is being sacrificed to the Government's 'monetary targets'. Instead of attempting the sort of reorganisation which could improve the supply of technicians and technologists, the Tories are putting general financial pressure on the whole system of education. The development of engineering skills at all levels will be damaged.

Technical change in capitalist economies always involves conflict. The labour movement has plenty of experience of the unemployment, deskilling and increased managerial control that can accompany new technology. Nevertheless, wide agreement was emerging in British society on the need for technical change in industry and on the need to avoid patterns of conflict and resistance which could ruin industrial advance and undermine living standards.

Although limited in scope, this consensus was of considerable significance — and intervention was central to it. For example, a number of reports have stressed the key role of the National Economic Development Office and its network of Sector Working Parties [15]. These were seen as a means of co-ordinating public and private sectors for technical change, of mobilising resources and planning for changing patterns of employment.

The Left has often criticised the way such bodies worked, and argued that the democracy they represented was often a matter of form rather than content.

Thatcher's Tories are terrified of even the potential democracy in such procedures. They are dismissing the Sector Working Parties just at the time when these are producing a stream of reports — endorsed by unions and management — on the concrete needs of British industries for the resources with which to modernise. For example, the Working Party for electronics components has reported the impossibility of meeting foreign competition without 'at least the levels of support planned by the last Government'. The Tories are going ahead with a £15 million cut and are also ignoring an urgent request for funds to develop opto-electronics.

But the fact that Tory policies will fail makes them even more dangerous

This is a representative case. The Tories want the capitalism of the past, insulated from democratic political pressures, where the prerogatives of property are unquestioned by unions. In pursuit of this dream, they sabotage the economy of the present and destroy its potential for future adaptation.

CONCLUSION

The Tories like to present their policies as hard-headed realism. They are certainly hard, but they are realistic only in the threat they pose to working people; the massive retreat from economic intervention at which they are aiming is not objectively possible without enormous damage to the industrial structure in Britain.

This is beginning to be recognised even in ruling circles — in industry, in the higher levels of the civil service, in the Government itself. Big business certainly welcomes the reduction in certain *types* of intervention, such as social security or health; but nothing is going to disentangle the network of interconnections between big business and the state which keeps the system going. Big business and government are still making a host of formal and informal agreements in the pursuit of economic and political objectives.

A striking example was the way in which the engineering company Stone-Platt was bailed out recently. This sort of rescue would have

embarrassed the Department of Industry; it was in fact organised by the Bank of England, using money put up by the City.

There are also signs of a more active procurement policy. Using public orders for goods and equipment to sustain manufacturing companies is one of the few channels of official intervention still wide open, and support funds are increasingly diverted in this direction. Again, there are moves to relax the squeeze on nationalised industries, while rumours are spreading of serious alarm in the Bank of England about the government's monetary policy.

These moves indicate the size of the gap between government policies and the objective needs of the British economy. Far from being realistic, the simplistic premises of Tory economics are largely a matter of wishful thinking. They refer not to contemporary capitalism but to the world Mrs Thatcher would no doubt like to see: a world where 'free' competition keeps down prices, where a stratum of small businessmen are the main dynamic force in the economy, where management commands and workers silently obey.

As a strategy for the modernisation of British industry and increasing the living standards of working people, Tory policies will fail, simply because they are based on assumptions remote from the objective position of the economy. Above all they assume away the central source of economic development — the continuous contribution made by working people in all walks of life to the maintenance and growth of the productive system. Only a mobilisation of these energies could begin to address the problems of British industrial decline. Terrified of the participation of working people in political life and in the control of economic decisions, Thatcher and Joseph are taking us further and further away from a solution.

But the fact that Tory policies will fail makes them even more dangerous. They are already doing serious damage both to the productive system and to the organisation of the labour movement within it. As at BL the Tory attack on working class standards and workers' organisation is being taken to the point of attacking labour as a *force of production*, even if this dislocates industry for years ahead. In working for resistance to Thatcher's government the Left must argue that democratic policies are the only effective way to reverse the long decline in British industry. □

[13] *New Statesman*, 4th April, 1980.

[14] Labour Party, *Economic Review*, September, 1979.

[15] For example, Department of Employment, *The Manpower Implications of Micro-Electronic Technology* and a series of reports from the Advisory Council on Applied Research and Development.

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David Triesman

POLITICS & SPORT

Of course sport is political. Given the importance it assumes in the lives of millions of people, it would be astonishing if it were not. Indeed, I suspect that the effort which is made in ruling ideology to suggest that sport and politics are completely autonomous realms is due to the real degree of convergence between them. The relationship obviously emerges most clearly in the international context, in the issues surrounding playing cricket and rugby with South Africa or in relation to the Moscow Olympics in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. But it is really present at many other levels.

It is present in all international sport in the run-of-the-mill nationalism of contestants and commentators. It appears within Britain in traditional north-south economic rivalries, in the differential access to sport resources enjoyed by members of different classes, in the fight for resources in the physical culture sector. And, at the deepest level, it is present in the way in which people talk about sport, in the characteristics which are attributed to particular sports, to those who play them and to those who watch. The shabby truisms wheeled out about manliness, individuality, competitiveness, and so on, usually associated with a negative and reactionary concept of 'human nature', are all political expressions about the social world and its inhabitants.

Thus, when we talk of people as fundamentally motivated by competitiveness, or the individual drive to win, or eager to see blood, or disciplined, or team-spirited, we are using everyday words to make fundamental propositions about human psychology, 'nature', and society. They seek to describe human relations in society to justify the basest and most negative view of our potential for change, freezing human psychology into formulae which no social change would eliminate.

While it would be valuable to explore these themes, this article cannot do so. It considers how and why sporting events are used in international power relations, the way in which two nations have focused on sport as an international instrument. And finally, I will make a preliminary consideration of how sporting accomplishment (or lack of it) is said to be associated with the character of the political regime in different countries. Evidently, we see the Olympic years highlight the extent of the overlap between sport and politics, and it is timely to consider the special status of the Olympics. Other years do provide climaxes of interest, in particular the years of planned Springbok tours of the 'Old Commonwealth'. In reality, sport and politics are continually intertwined, and these are simply the occasions when the images appear in sharp relief.

Politics and the Olympic Movement

Two 'world' sporting events command infinitely more prestige than any others. At the risk of offending the officionardos of Lancashire Crown Green Bowling or the All Bankok Society of Game Fishermen, or others with a sectional interest in a particular spot, it seems clear to me that the Association Football World Cup and the Olympic Games are in a class of their own.

The World Cup has a special status because it is a single sport (soccer) event watched directly or indirectly by 600 million people each time its final is contested. It is a tournament contested by professionals (although the socialist countries tend to find alternative formulae for describing their professionals), many of whom are week-in, week-out stars in their own right. As a contest, it allows the competing nations to run riot in terms of national chauvinism and xenophobia, and its eliminating rounds have even led to warfare between two Central American nations. International focus on the World Cup occurs because it is the climax of a

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sport massively popular in its own right, and a major national institution in many countries.

Because it is competed for by *national teams*, as opposed to individuals, there is little to deflect the patriot from giving full vent to his/her fantasies about nation, destiny and the perfidy of other peoples, the quintessence of which is invariably to be found in the playing methods and standards of sportsmanship of the other side's centre half. With journalists and commentators stoking the atmosphere by adding florid simile to baroque epithet, with every free-kick on the edge of one's penalty area as potentially lethal as the retreat from Dunkirk, every ancient national rivalry rekindled into contemporary drama, it becomes possible to conjure out of a football match a sense of nation usually present only in war.

The more repressive the home regime, the more parlous its economic circumstances, the more this jingoism will flourish. Commentators achieve bellicose rhetoric at new levels: their centre forward, whose violent assualts on our defenders suggest that he must have been fed raw meat prior to having his manacles removed before the match, is now lying in the middle of the pitch with a broken, cheekbone after a firm but fair tackle by our left back. The foreigner (who will have a torid latin temperament or South American passions, etc) should, when the trainer brings him round with the smelling salts be given an Oscar for his acting ability. Their midfield player (an animal) who has tapped our left winger on the ankle should be arrested for attempted murder. So powerful are these nationalistic institutions, especially during the World Cup, that even countries close to economic collapse can manage to ignore their plight. Italy, for example, under the Christian Democrats, where players and officials are celebrated for the size of the inducements they receive, and where they come to share prison cells with the most eminent of fraudulent bankers, can afford to ignore the fall of yet another government on days boasting World Cup elimination matches.

The Olympics

The World Cup is a vortex of chauvinist politics, although it has seldom been a centre for political dissent. The Olympics, the second 'super' contest, is more interesting having greater scope for political manipulation (for good or ill) for a number of reasons that bear examination.

First, it is an international event from which no nation can, in the general run of events, be disenfranchised. Unlike the World Cup, every athlete regarded as acceptable to the individual national Olympics Committees may try their luck in competition. It is open to those who want to compete for the rewards of having taken part; only one in twenty-five will stand on the rostrum at the end of an event. Thus, for example, a deservedly unknown Lebanese skier had the right, at Lake Placid, to take over twice as long as A-M Moser Proll in descending the women's downhill, simply because she wanted to have a go at it and the Lebanese Committee said she could. Thus, the Olympics are 'available' and there are consequent opportunities for political demonstration and the exercise of leverage. For example, the African nations took the opportunity in Montreal to hammer home the isolation of South Africa by trying to get New Zealand banned for playing with apartheid, and all African nations were able to engage whether in the front rank of the sporting nations or not. The failure to ban New Zealand removed numerous key athletes from the Olympics. *The Olympics give everyone the opportunity to mount a protest.*

Second, the very fact that almost every nation is present at a Summer Olympics gives the hosting nation unusual opportunities to extol its political and ideological system on a world stage. All nations do so (for good or ill). With the TV and movie cameras of every other nation present, the chance occurs for leaders to portray their state at what they take to be its best. Indeed, before the pervasive presence of TV, the attempt has always been made to demonstrate a connection between excellence across a broad spectrum of physical culture and culture in all other respects by hosting nations. Examples illustrate the point. In Germany in 1936, a sustained effort was made to attach images of sporting success to Ayrian 'excellence' in general. Thus, it was no accident that Hitler and Goebbels stormed from the Olympic arena each time the late, magnificent Jesse Owens clinched one of his four gold medals in track and field. Hitler's attempt to recoup the Ayrian sporting image exercised him for two years finally to be demolished by Joe Louis (the Brown Bomber) who, in 2:04 minutes of the first round of the world title heavyweight fight, nearly detached the head of the German nazi-sympathising champion, Max Schmeling, from his body.

In 1948, the Olympic parades in Empire Way, Wembley, were carefully orchestrated to demonstrate the extent of Britain's warm, paternal, benevolent rule over the post-war remnants of the colonial world, symbolised in the very name of the avenue through which the athletes paraded. Naturally, to capitalise on the prestige of the Games means that the host nations do not tolerate any untoward signs of disaffection. A compliant population is needed to underpin the impression of social excellence. It was, again, no accident that the Mexican government thought it necessary to shoot down over 200 of its citizens shortly before the Games in Mexico City (1968) to 'maintain public order'. It is worth noting that the very fact of holding the 1968 Games on the American sub-continent was of more general political significance. 1968 marked the culmination of the work of a black athletic protest movement first proposed by the black political satirist Dick Gregory before the 1960 Olympics. He argued that the Olympics exploited black Americans who were allowed to temporarily emerge from the ghettos of Harlem, the Chicago South Side and Watts for the greater glory of the USA, a glory to which they were otherwise allowed no access.

It will be recalled that the protest, finally masterminded and orchestrated by Harry Edwards, the San Jose State College basketball coach, culminated on the victory rostrum in the clenched-fist black power salutes of Tommie Smith (who held 11 world sprint records), Lee Evans (who with the Cuban Juantorena was among the world's greatest modern quarter-milers), and John Carlos (one-time 200 meter sprint record holder and Olympic bronze medalist). These were the athletes who chose the American sub-continental venue to turn their backs on their national flag before world-wide television audiences.

it becomes possible to conjure out of a football match a sense of nation usually present only in war

The world stage is again set at the Moscow Summer Games for massive demonstrations of prestige on the part of the host and by equally massive demonstrations of hostility by the nations seeking opportunities to attack that prestige. It is no real inconsistency that leads the Tories, after muted Ministerial protest, to allow a British Lions rugby tour to go ahead in South Africa at the same time as harrassing every sportsperson who wants to go to Moscow. As with the USA, each measure taken in the international sport world is an extension of diplomatic and political policy. While the invasion of Afghanistan may have provided a reason, the original choice of Moscow for the 19th Summer Games raised the voices of the demagogues of the Cold War, long before most of them had learned to spell Kabul, and those who could thought it was a brand of cigarettes. The message is simple. *So long as so much international prestige is available to*

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either side, it is a 'natural' sphere of political manoeuvre. Britain and the USA will, under their current political leaderships, contend that politics should be kept out of sport, at the same time that they cooperate with other right wing regimes in sporting links.

Its growth

Third, the simple statement that the Olympic competition is very large is really to understate its unique character. Indeed, its very size has been the subject of political and philosophical controversy. Unlike all World Championships, it involves simultaneous competition in an unparalleled number of sports, each involving many events. The Olympic movement has a tendency to all-inclusiveness and the pattern of growth is significant in making the Games a prime political target. The figures in the table below refer to the Summer Games, although the Winter Games have the same characteristics but on a smaller scale.

Development of Sports and Events in the Olympic Games reflected in figures

	Number of Sports	Events		Number of Sports	Events
1896	8	43	1948	19	150
1900	9	56	1952	19	149
1904	9	73	1956	19	151
1908	23	109	1960	19	150
1912	16	107	1964	21	163
1920	22	158	1968	20	172
1924	19	131	1972	21	195
1928	16	122	1976	21	198
1932	17	126	1980	21	203
1936	21	144			

The growth in volume of events, especially since 1972 has been due in no small measure to the general international development of womens' sports, though even the growth pattern shown understates the number of sports that have been played at the Olympics. Of the original programme of eight, only four appear in the 1980 programme — athletics, gymnastics, fencing and swimming/waterpolo. Others have come and gone having been contested only a few times — lawn tennis (6), equestrian polo (3), tug-of-war (3), rugby (2), jeu de palme (1), lacrosse (1), alpinism (1), racquets (1) and motorboat racing (1).

In fact, the panel which decides which sports should be included has, since the Varna Congress in 1973, been the location of several political and technical battles. It has sought to restrict new sports to those where the results can be determined by the stop-watch or equally objective measure, excluding those new sports requiring judges to mark performance. But of more significance, there have been long arguments about restricting the enormity of the Olympics so that either smaller countries could stage it, or so that it could be divided between a number of sites in one country, thus reducing the accumulated prestige manifest at one site. At a more philosophical level, Olympic Committees have long argued that team events should be eliminated, leaving only competitions between *individual* athletes. The virtue of the individual against his/her peers and the clock rather than the 'adulteration' of cooperation between team members carried with it political connotations about the desirability of rugged individualism as a measure of human excellence.

> it involves simultaneous competition in an unparalleled number of sports

The keypoint about the gigantism of the Game is that the burgeoning size focuses so much attention on the Games that they become more of a political target as time goes by. Equally, it gives them a political status expressed in the Charter of the Games itself. As IOC Rule 1 states

> 'The aims of the Olympic movement are to promote the development of those fine physical and moral qualities which are the basis of sport and to bring together the athletes of the world in a great quadrennial festival of sports thereby creating international respect and goodwill and thus helping to construct a *better and more peaceful* world'. (my emphasis — DT).

Nationalism and Sport

Nothing said so far argues for or against the Olympic movement being political. Rather, I simply say that it is, as a matter of fact. The question remains: is this an unavoidable state of affairs? My own view is that it is entirely unavoidable, quite irrespective of whether it is desirable to try to avoid it.

Nations compete in many forms. They compete in all spheres of international economic life in the capitalist world. They compete for scarce resources. They compete for military supremacy whether exercising that supremacy or not. And it is also true that the newspapers of the world carry the evidence of those competitions whether as the statements on balance of trade deficits or in publicity puffs for swing-wing vertical take-off submarines. But there is a level to which such 'news' does not penetrate as it attempts to mask the nature of the competition involved. West German newspapers do not, when reporting a favourable balance of payments use headlines like 'West Germany gives French Trade a Thrashing'.

Sporting events have a different quality. They provide a limited, or a 'managed' occasion when press and state organs can openly stimulate national rivalry, and thus, nationalism. Every moment of a major sporting event is open to ritual xenophobia and to appeals for what amounts to national cohesion. The particular scope of the opportunities provided lies in the fact that the sporting event does not appear so important that using it for chauvinistic reasons seems particularly dreadful. One can wallow in nationalism and then excuse one's behaviour by saying 'well, its only a game'. Thus, sporting events allow for the inculcation of values which are useful to governments and yet appear not to be of real significance.

To successfully capitalise on such emotions, it has traditionally been said in Britain that it makes little difference whether you win or lose. When winning, the natural superiority of the British appears confirmed; when losing, strong character traits of fortitude, being a 'good loser', of having the right measure of things — since after all, its only a game, and so on, can be paraded with almost as much conviction as winning is celebrated. A British athlete winning seems to do so by effortless ability, not deigning to put in more effort even at the risk of losing. Foreigners seek victory with a kind of relentlessness which makes the whole conquest a display of cheap vanity. What is to be made then of those nations which produce strings of winners in wide varieties of sports, countries like the GDR which routinely produces winners in athletics, swimming, rowing, bobbing, lifting and so on. This brings us to the second major political question to be explored in this article.

Sporting Accomplishment and National Character

The British media are particularly strong when it comes to 'well known facts'. The fact that the Queen Mother is universally adored, or that Prince Charles has international renown for his sense of humour are matters upon which no rational person could express a contrary opinion. It is equally 'true' that the socialist countries, and the Soviet Union, GDR and Romania in particular, seize children almost at birth, force-feed them with drugs and train them in all manner of sports before they can walk. Obviously, any nation which does that will produce an abnormally high number of champions, but it is equally evident that it is accomplished only at a human cost of such proportions that GDR women swimmers, we were told in 1976

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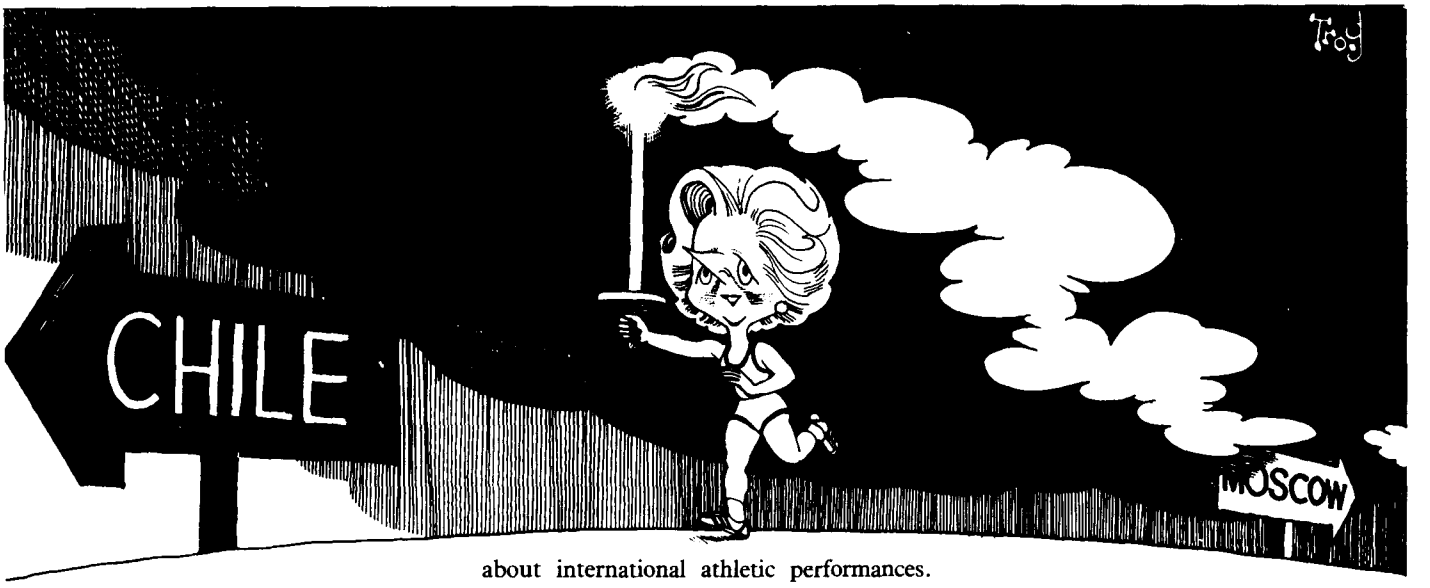

were trained to the point of sterility. Source of information: an American women silver medalist who lost to Kornelia Ender and thought that East German women were unattractive, 'unfeminine', obsessed with their sport, and therefore, unlikely to win the ultimate of all competitions, finding a man. This year, the same hoary stories are back again. In a new book *The Miracle Machine*, Doug Gilbert rediscovers the truth about GDR Olympic success. In order to attain a *per capita* chance 14 times as great as an American of striking gold, the GDR planned to reconstruct its sport which is geared ruthlessly to winning. Huge sporting meetings are held where 10,000 children at a time compete before coaches who select from their number an elite. It requires 8000 full-time athletics coaches to accomplish this.

Chosen at the age of 10, Gilbert would have us believe they are inducted into special schools where coaches, scientists and doctors measure just about everything that can be measured, and they are subjected to electrical stimulation of the muscles which increases muscle strength by 50% in two weeks. It goes without saying that the inventor of this demonic apparatus is a Soviet scientist, Yakou Kots. Moreover, to the dismay of Western coaches, GDR athletes are said to use muscle-building anabolic steroids, and to justify doing so by saying that they cannot be detected in dope tests. It is a matter of record that the GDR coaches discovered the use of steroids by taking long-distance photographs of American shot-putters eating them for lunch.

It is, of course, a perfectly proper question to ask how a particular country produces a disproportionately large number of world-class athletes, and whether this reflects unacceptable practices rather than a social system geared to more wide-spread physical culture. Before one can answer such a question, it is instructive to look at the facts about international athletic performances. How much is truth, how much is myth?

Recent findings

In recent research, John Bale of Avery Hill College has considered the success of different national coaching schemes in producing world class athletes. All nations have a *per capita* output of athletes, and the names of all athletes who record world class times or measures in events are recorded each year in the *Report of the Association of Track and Field Statisticians*. Bale recorded the top 50 measured athletes in 18 track and field events and built an index of the *per capita* production of such athletes by the European nations. He also developed a method of measuring the degree of diversity in the events in which a nation's athletes were successful.

The results of the research are fascinating for they immediately destroy many of the myths. Two countries emerge as spectacular — Finland and the GDR, with Finland having the highest place in the index and the GDR, having the next highest and the greatest diversity. Placed respectively 15th and 16th among the European nations come the USSR and UK, both being, in a *per capita* sense about a thirteenth as successful as Finland. Both rank below average in this respect. Thus, while the total number of

> Two countries emerge as spectacular — Finland and the GDR

Olympic golds won by the Soviet Union was greater in 1976 than any other country, when considered in terms of overall performance and population size, many of the characterisations of Soviet sport are mythical.

But there is little doubt that the GDR has an entirely different status. One in every six of the entire population is in a well-funded sports club, organised by a third of a million popularly elected officials. Anyone, whether a potential Olympic champion or weekend enthusiast can take part in almost any sport. It is difficult under such circumstances to miss talented sportspersons or to neglect to develop their capability. It is interesting that where individuals become champions, considerable effort is put into reintegrating them into more mundane roles when their days as top competitors are over.

It will be seen from the brief description given of European rankings and of the GDR's method of encouraging physical culture that a crude distinction between what happens in the east and west European nations is unwarranted. Countries including Finland, East Germany, Switzerland, Norway and Sweden have high outputs of athletes, while the USSR, UK, Netherlands, Yugoslavia, Spain and Denmark have a relatively low output. Additionally, since there does not appear to be any direct correlation between political system and athletic attainment, it is simply not possible to make out the kind of case so well loved by Western media about the forced factories of athletics production. No one claims, to my knowledge, that the Finns are culpable in this respect, although they might well be said to be the best qualified to be the butt of such absurd claims.

I am not familiar with the selection and coaching methods adopted in Finland, nor with the proportions of its population actively engaged in physical culture. But the case which I have briefly reviewed does appear to show evidence that a decision to make widespread and extensive provision for all sections of the population is closely associated with international success, as well as transforming some of the bastions of male sport into arenas in which women also compete. As is well known, men and women do not yet compete with each other, but it is a matter of note that the rate of progress among

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women in bringing down records on the track could lead to parity within a generation.

Once the invasion occurred, she threw all gears into reverse

Britain and the current Olympics

The first shots at the Moscow Games were fired long before the International Olympics Committee had fixed the venue. British Tories were to be found quoting Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Victor Korchnoi with a fervour normally reserved for repeating the wisdoms of Peregrine Worsthorne It was, however, a forlorn opposition and the venue was fixed and agreed without much difficulty.

It was evidently not until the invasion of Afghanistan that the hawks found a tactical breach through which they could again advance their cause. Margaret Thatcher's response was, from the day of the invasion entirely predictable, though it should not be thought that she had been among the early hawks. Indeed, she had supported a Moscow Games and had been patron of the Olympic Appeals Committee. Once the invasion had occurred, she threw all gears into reverse and acted with a determinedness bereft of either tactical thought or essential knowledge.

Her first response was to stand down from the Appeals Committee, and her second was to threaten to prevent athletes from attending Moscow by methods which embarrassed civil servants rapidly indicated were impossible, ineffective or illegal. Her first instinct was to sequester competitors' passports. She graduated to trying to prevent people from taking their summer vacations and to threatening their job security if in government employment. She could scarcely have chosen less appropriate threats, and has, at most, produced a set of embarrassing resignations as athletes left the civil service and police force rather than comply. The latest defector is shot-putter Geoff Capes.

In each of these excursions, she has clearly been slavishly loyal to requests from Jimmy Carter, and, indeed, she shows all the finesse of a Southern Democrat. He, at least, can comfort himself with the knowledge that bellicose tactics appear to have paid off despite efforts to reach the Games by American athletes who have considered ways of more or less smuggling themselves out of the USA. Thatcher is compelled to persist in a line which, if finally unsuccessful, will show a significant lack of control on her part of a set of events which she set in train.

Three things strike me as particularly interesting about the Tory strategy. The first is that they are prepared to openly acknowledge that sporting events must be conceived of as political and therefore are entirely proper means to furthering foreign policy. And in the same vein, they see this particular response as giving them siginificant opportunities of achieving a wider political goal, namely of showing the Americans that they have more concern for the Atlantic axis than do other European powers by leading the anti-Moscow campaign in Europe.

The second is that they have, as British Olympic Committee chairman, Sir Dennis Follows, has indicated been prepared to act without regard to all advice from the international sports administrators and specialists, 'from a position of amazing ignorance and without expert consultation'. In short, this policy has been conceived with the same attention to detail that it is understood has characterised several of the key Tory strategies. Like the planned reorganisation of the health service, and of London education, the decisions are taken irrespective of all consultative advice in an atmosphere of unadulterated ignorance.

Third, they have clearly adopted what I would call a 'Staff College mentality'. Like the nuclear war game constructors who 'game

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out' the obscene calculus of megadeaths and the loss of Baltimore for Leningrad in the inner sanctums of Camberley, they work on a 'how far can we go and what will each step cost' basis. Thus, economic sanctions are too expensive, but sports intervention is not; diplomatic absence on May Day is 'cost-effective', but withdrawal of diplomatic links is not.

economic sanctions are too expensive, but sports intervention is not

Conclusion

I have argued that various aspects of sport are intrinsically connected to political processes, and that they cannot be sensibly disentangled. I have tried to indicate that judgement about the politics involved calls for the same general criteria of judgement that would be applied to other political arenas.

Indeed, some states explicitly recognise this in describing the norms of sporting life. In the Soviet Union, for example, the Committee for Physical Culture and Sport, attached to the Council of Ministers, has listed in its objectives:

> 'iv) To plan the rules and norms for the competition "Ready for labour and defence of the Soviet Union". . .
>
> x) Along with the Trade Unions, Komsomol and other organisations, to conduct educational work among sportsmen and PE specialists'.

Other states do not.

Next, I have tried to indicate the essential triviality of the characterisation of sportspersons from other countries in an attempt to demean their success as due to alien and oppressive cradle-snatching activities which would be abhorent to a civilised sporting nation. The evidence for this does not bear examination. Just as one would expect in health, education or housing, countries appear to get out of sport what they put in. These and other arguments cannot account for the British response to the Olympics for that response is simply a matter of political calculation and expediency.

In short, the political stratagems are fairly standard ones in the conduct of international relations. And, equally, it is necessary to form a judgement on the basis of the real political conjuncture rather than on the basis of an entirely abstract set of principles. The questions seem to me to occur in this order: First, is it wrong in principle, as some people have suggested, for politicians to interfere in the operation of 'autonomous' sporting organisations? Second, what judgement can one make of the current Olympics?

In response to the first question, I cannot accept that it is always wrong in principle for governments to intervene. It is easy enough to recall those occasions when many of us have campaigned for governmental intervention with the Rugby Union, the Davis Cup, or the Test and County Cricket Board. The fact is that anyone on the Left will want to hold in reserve the possibility of preventing sport with apartheid, or of an Olympics staged under the circumstances of, for example, the Berlin Olympics of 1936. Complete autonomy is too costly, too indiscriminate a dispensation for any social organisation, whether they are involved in sport or any other activity.

The second question is more complex because it necessarily involves more pragmatic considerations. It is my view that the Moscow Olympics should be supported unequivocally. It is not being conducted under circumstances remotely analagous to the 1936 Olympics, and every step in its preparation has been directed toward accomodating different visiting teams from countries with widely different regimes. The detente character of the preparations have been cemented by allowing the International Olympics Committee to deal with all matters of invitation and related organisation, thereby accepting precisely the same requirements made of any recent host nation. In addition, in a climate where any addition to world cooperation is a bonus, these Olympics have the potential that all Olympics should have — to foster international cooperation, friendly competition, and engagement in physical culture with peoples of all kinds, creeds, colours and persuasions — in large measure. The Olympics achieve this potential for cooperation on a unique scale, symbolised at the end of each Games in the promise to meet again in peace four years hence to renew the spirit of cooperation and friendship between 'non-political' people. In this sense, the Games have a powerful ingredient, not to be underestimated: cohesion. The Moscow Olympics has this potential; the Berlin Olympics did not.

I have heard it said of all sports, the Olympics included, that because they are competitions, with people winning or losing, beating each other along a track or over a bar or into submission in a ring, vitiate something intrinsic to a 'socialist way of life'. It would follow, on this line of argument, that we should be indifferent or hostile to international and local sport. I utterly reject this view. Relationships between people are made up of many qualities which have the potential for either constructive or destructive options. In sport, in order to play with or against people, cooperation is essential for it is necessary to cooperate with opponents in order to play at all. In the right circumstances, it can weald relationships as politically and socially viable as any others. Indeed, it has more potential than many others because the preconditions for cooperation, the potentiation of friendship, is well established in advance, and it takes an open decision to make an event like the Olympics a stage for explicit racism, to vitiate that potential.

In reaching such a conclusion, there need be no implication that it approves or sanctions the invasion of another country or the movement of domestic dissidents away from Moscow. □

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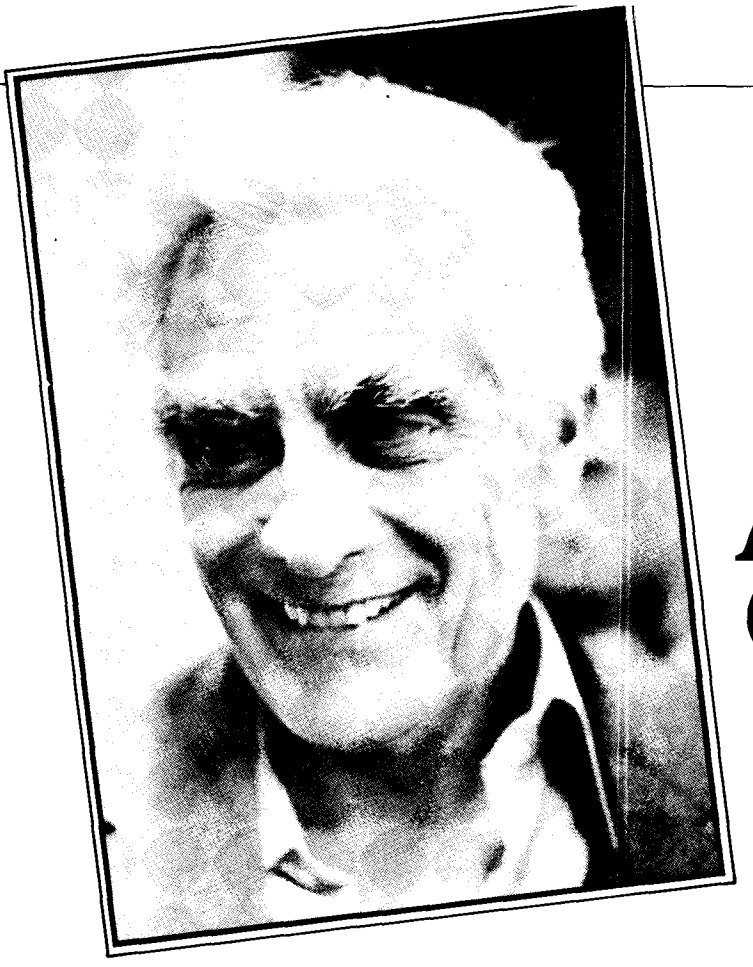

Alvaro Cunhal

Interviewed by Paul Fauvet

How would you characterise the present government and the forces that support it?

The present government is basically composed of the two main right-wing parties, the PPD and CDS. These two parties are trying not merely to carry out a different policy from previous governments, but to push through an operation the aim of which is the liquidation of Portuguese democracy. There are three phases to this. First, the most rapid destruction possible by the Government of the great democratic gains of our people — workers' rights, the Agrarian Reform and the nationalisations. Second, unconstitutional laws which also undermine these gains — a new electoral law which would transform the coming elections into an electoral farce and would guarantee victory to the right-wing parties, regardless of the actual strength of their vote. And finally, the unconstitutional amendment of the Constitution. This is a vast operation of a subversive, anti-constitutional and illegal nature — and today the Portuguese people, the Portuguese working class, all Portugal's democrats are defending the Constitution, democratic legality and the democratic form of government.

Can you say something about the popular resistance to the policies of the Government? To what extent has this resistance successfully safeguarded the gains made during the revolution?

Firstly, it should be made clear that the struggles of the working class and popular masses develop strictly within the framework of democratic legality. This struggle has been taking place ever since the massive offensive against the gains of the revolution was launched, and we can say that, were it not for the strength of our people, then not only would the major structural changes in Portugal have been destroyed, but so would the democratic regime itself. Indeed, the resistance to the illegal and unconstitutional policies of the Government is very intense. Every day there are huge demonstrations and marches, strikes on a national scale, and it is thanks to this brave, tenacious, and sometimes (as with the workers of the Agrarian Reform) heroic struggle that the reactionary forces have still not managed to destroy the essential core of the gains made after 25 April (date of the 1974 overthrow of fascism — PF). Undoubtedly they have reduced the scope of these gains — as regards workers' rights, our people's living standards, the theft of an enormous amount of land, livestock and machinery from the collectives and cooperatives — but even so the Portuguese revolution is alive and kicking, and the democratic gains embodied in the Constitution will, in our view, be defended effectively.

Do you think that the strength of the popular movement and the balance of class forces in Portugal are such as to defeat the most important measures of the Government?

Yes, we work and struggle for this. We think that it is both possible and necessary to block this huge and violent reactionary offensive against the Agrarian Reform, the nationalisations and workers' rights, that it is possible to hold the coming elections under democratic conditions, and that, if this happens, the right-wing

> the aim of which is the liquidation of Portuguese democracy

parties will be defeated. They will be reduced again to a minority, and conditions created, with a democratic parliamentary majority, for the formation of a democratic government with a democratic political practice.

Why does the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) consider the Agrarian Reform 'the most beautiful gain' of the revolution? What is its special importance in terms of democracy and of creating a social situation favourable to an advance to socialism?

Transcribed and translated by Paul Fauvet 22/4/80

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It isn't only the PCP that considers the Agrarian Reform 'the most beautiful gain'. This is what the workers of the Agrarian Reform say, it's what the workers in general say, it's what everyone in Portugal says who wants to build a genuinely democratic society. It's 'the most beautiful gain' because this is the sector of national life where the workers, with their own strength, their creative initiative, their labour, their imagination, and in permanent struggle against government attacks, managed not only to transform the agricultural economy of an important region, but also to create a new life for those who work the land. The workers undertook the transformation of agriculture in a zone where previously land was abandoned and thousands of workers were unemployed. They diversified the crops, they increased considerably the number of livestock, they invested in projects that represented real agricultural progress. Despite all the difficulties, they built social facilities — creches, playgrounds, old people's centres. An end was put to the chronic unemployment that used to exist in the Agrarian Reform zone.[1] Jobs were guaranteed to all those who were unemployed. The Agrarian Reform made a massive contribution not only to agriculture and the national economy, but also to improving the life of the workers in the region.

We therefore consider that this, 'the most beautiful gain' of the revolution, is essential if the democratic regime in Portugal is to continue. In our view political democracy, democratic freedoms in our country cannot be separated from the transformations that have taken place in our socio-economic structures. To defend the Agrarian Reform is to defend democratic freedoms, and to defend democratic freedoms is to defend the Agrarian Reform.

If the reactionary forces were to manage to wipe out the Agrarian Reform completely, if they managed to restore the power of the great landowners, as they are trying to do, then this would also mean the loss of political freedoms, the end of democracy in our country.

The right-wing says that it defends the interests of the small farmers of the north and centre. What are the main problems confronting these farmers? What is the PCP's policy for solving these problems?

The question involves many complex points, difficult to answer briefly. Firstly, the right-wing parties do not defend the interests of the small farmers. They defend the interests of the latifundists, to whom they illegally hand over land from the collectives and cooperatives, reconstructing the great landed estates, and the interests of the rich landlords who oppress thousands and thousands of peasant farmers. The problems of the small farmers are very serious, and we could say that it is these social classes who benefitted least from 25 April. Measures that could have led to substantial changes in the working and living conditions of the small farmers were not carried out. There are various problems — problems of credit, of the distribution of farm produce, of insufficient land for many small proprietors, of tenant-farmers being unable to benefit from improvements they make, and being liable to arbitrary eviction from their plots by the rich landlords. Our Party has drawn up a platform for the struggle of the small farmers, and a complete definition of basic aims — and it's no accident that support for and membership of the PCP among small farmers has grown.

The small farmers are very important — they carry out much of Portugal's agriculture. Their problems should meet with a favourable response as their own organisations, and our Party, argue.

The PCP is opposed to Portugal's entry into the EEC. What are the reasons for this? What effect would entry have on Portuguese agriculture?

The PCP is absolutely opposed to Portugal joining the EEC for three reasons. First, the different levels of economic development between Portugal and the developed countries of the EEC — this gives neither our industry nor our agriculture the ability to compete with goods from the EEC on our own domestic market once we are obliged to lift our tariff barriers.

Secondly, the policy of the EEC is carried out by the great capitalist groups. We think there is no identity between the interests of these groups and those of our people and country.

Thirdly, Portugal's entry into the EEC is designed not so much to solve the problems of the Portuguese economy, but to destroy the gains made by the Portuguese people. The reactionary forces are trying to use integration into the EEC as an argument for the liquidation of the nationalisations and the Agrarian Reform, for the restoration of monopoly capitalism in Portugal, for the destruction of 25 April, on the grounds that the economic structures in Portugal should be identical to those in the rest of the EEC, where, as we know, state monopoly capitalism is dominant.

As for agriculture, as I've said, if Portugal joins the EEC, neither in agriculture nor in industry will our producers enjoy the necessary conditions to compete, and many thousands of them would be bankrupted and ruined. We think that EEC entry would have disastrous results for our economy, for small producers in industry and agriculture, and for the very independence of our country.

Portugal did not nationalise banks — it nationalised banking

Can you say something about the offensive against the nationalised sector, particularly the banks and insurance companies? What do you think of the problems in the banking and insurance trade unions where there are executives affiliated to the breakaway UGT and not to Intersindical?[2]

The offensive against the nationalisations has been going on for some years. We should not confuse the Portuguese nationalisations with nationalisations that have taken place in certain other capitalist countries — some, naturally, because of working class struggle, but others on the initiative of the monopoly groups themselves, interested in dumping deficits from firms that aren't profitable onto the state budget. These are nationalisations promoted by capitalism itself. In Portugal the nationalisations were not of this kind. They resulted from the effective liquidation of the monopoly groups, from the disappearance of finance capital, from the revolutionary measures of our people which transformed our socio-economic structures.

The banks and insurance companies were nationalised, and so were other basic sectors of the economy. The policies of successive governments have attacked this — starting with the Socialist Party minority government which passed a law putting the nationalisations at risk, right up to the present Government which is going for a *de facto* liquidation of the nationalisations. The scheme the Government has adopted goes further than measures of general policy — credit policy, pricing policy, foreign trade policy — which in themselves were already creating difficulties for the nationalised companies, and favouring the private sector. Apart from these measures the Government has tried to pass a law that would allow private concerns to set up banks, insurance companies and their own firms in sectors that were nationalised in toto *as sectors*. Portugal did not nationalise

[1] The Agrarian Reform zone covers the southern districts of the Alentejo and the Ribatejo.

[2] Intersindical is Portugal's TUC, founded clandestinely in 1971 and represents over 75% of all Portuguese workers and over 95% of industrial workers. The UGT is a right-wing breakaway set up in 1978 with Socialist Party and PPD support.

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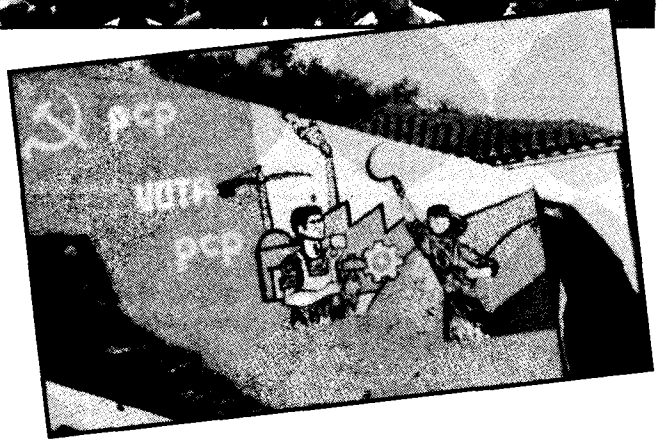

banks — it nationalised banking. It did not nationalise this or that insurance company — it nationalised all insurance activity. So this law, trying to open up these sectors to private enterprise, would be a serious blow to the nationalisations. The Constitutional Committee and the Revolutionary Council have declared that this law is unconstitutional, so at the moment it hasn't been passed. Despite this the Government is preparing another law of the same kind. But we think that, unconstitutional as it is, this will suffer the same fate as its predecessor.

As for the unions, it is interesting to note that despite reactionary influences in the banking and insurance unions, the members of these unions are, in general, in favour of continuing with the nationalisations — apart from anything else, government policy of making things difficult for the nationalised banks could spell unemployment for many workers, and the same goes for the insurance companies. Even in unions where the executives are not progressive on the question of the nationalisations, positive positions have been taken.

What importance in the PCP's strategy has the Constitution and its defence? What are the most positive features of the Constitution and which articles are most under attack?

A country's constitution is its basic law. All citizens and the government must comply with it. The Portuguese Constitution was approved by the Constituent Assembly with the votes of all the parties bar one — even the party to which the present Prime Minister belongs at that time approved the changes in Portuguese society. It declares that the nationalisations are irreversible and that the latifundia cannot be restored. The Constitution declares that the rights and freedoms of workers cannot be subject to constitutional amendment, and likewise the principle of proportional representation in elections. It safeguards

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the democratic character of the Portuguese regime with its specific features arising from the process of democraticisation. It is an essential factor for stability. Naturally our Party holds that the Constitution, as the fundamental law, obliges everyone — from ordinary citizens to the government — to defend it and to defend democracy. But today the reactionary parties are trying to destroy the Constitution, and to amend it in an unconstitutional way — by neither respecting the limits put on amendment by article 290 of the Constitution, nor the correct procedures laid down in the Constitution for its amendment, nor the principle that constitutional amendments must have a two-thirds majority in parliament.

Naturally, they attack all those articles of the Constitution that correspond to stability and to the impossibility of altering the most profound changes in Portuguese society — the Agrarian Reform, the nationalisations and workers' rights. Not only do they attack these basic principles, but it is their intention to destroy the Constitution in to order destroy the democratic regime. The battle for the Constitution is a battle for democracy itself. We defend the maintenance of the Constitution, though naturally we accept constitutional amendments provided these take place within the framework laid down by the Constitution.

Do you think there are any negative features in the Constitution, features you would like to see altered?

Not particularly. Experience shows us that there are some slight adjustments that could be made. There have been some difficult moments in the functioning of our institutions because some articles are not well drafted. There are questions relating to our sovereign bodies[3] — for instance, the Revolutionary Council. Our Party has no objection to it continuing — but there is a strong current of opinion, including from within the armed forces, and within the Council itself, that it should disappear. If this sovereign body were to disappear, then we think that in another constitutional amendment its attributes should pass to other sovereign bodies, without altering its basic character — that is a politico-military body which guarantees that the armed forces are in favour of the defence of democracy and national independence.

At last year's 9th PCP Congress, you said: 'If the democratic forces do not manage (though we are sure they will manage) to impose finally a democratic shift in the organs of power, then these organs will end up by destroying the gains of the democratic revolution, and with them, the democratic regime itself'. In the light of the present situation and the existing balance of forces, which of these alternatives — democratic shift or destruction of democracy — seems more likely? In the recent past the PCP has argued that there was no chance of a stable bourgeois democracy in Portugal — either the revolutionary gains would be maintained, or a new dictatorship would arise? Do you still think that these are the only two alternatives possible?

In our view the defence of the Agrarian Reform, the nationalisations and workers' rights are inseparable from the defence of political democracy. Portugal's democracy cannot be compared with the democracy that exists in other Western European capitalist countries. Monopoly capitalism was eliminated, but still persists in these other countries. We also have an Agrarian Reform with a socialist character. Portuguese democracy in the constitutional framework that we defend has different characteristics from bourgeois democracies.

As for the balance of forces we cannot take elections results as the sole indicator. There are other measures — for instance the participation of the workers, of our people in social and political life, and also in economic life. It's one thing to cast your vote, and another

Portugal's democracy cannot be compared with the democracy that exists in other Western European capitalist countries

to take part in the political life of the nation. In our view what is going to happen — we have confidence in our people! — is not the liquidation of Portuguese democracy, but a democratic shift that will guarantee our revolutionary gains — firstly, through the struggle of the working class and democratic forces to bring to a halt the criminal offensive which the Government has launched against the democratic transformations embodied in the Constitution. Secondly, by ensuring that the Parliamentary elections in September or October are held under democratic conditions. If these are democratic, we are convinced that the reactionary parties will again be reduced to what they are — a minority. This will deprive them of any juridical legitimacy to form a new government. If the Sa Carneiro government has not already fallen by then, it will do so at this point, and the democratic majority in parliament will create some of the basic conditions for a democratic government.

A democratic parliamentary majority raises the question of left unity. How does the PCP see this problem, particularly united action between communists and socialists?

As is well known we have a severely critical attitude towards the behaviour of the Socialist Party leadership and of the PS governments, fundamentally because when in government the PS launched the offensive against the nationalistions, the Agrarian Reform and workers' rights. The Socialist Party allied with the right. It formed a government with the CDS — the most right-wing party in parliament. The PS government drew up a series of laws attacking our people's revolutionary gains — we called these laws 'the legislative counter-revolution'. So we are very critical of the way the PS leadership and successive PS governments have carried on. This does not mean that we have not fought for the unity of Portuguese democrats, and particularly unity between communists and socialists. In the framework of Portugal's institutions, a solution based on those institutions depends on an understanding between socialists and communists. So, despite the continued refusals of the PS leadership to unite with communists, despite the statements at the time of the elections by Mario Soares that one of the aims of the PS was to block the progress of the PCP, we continue to argue for unity and understanding between communists, socialists and other democrats as a very important condition for a democratic shift in Portuguese politics. Ours is a policy of unity. We insist on it, and if the PS leadership doesn't understand it, there are many thousands of PS members and supporters who do understand the real need for unity among democrats and who, in day to day struggles, already work together with communists and other democrats to confront the reactionary offensive.

Are there any signs of a change in the Socialist Party leadership's attitude towards left unity?

Well, we say that there's no smoke without fire, but at the moment we still can't see enough smoke to say, yes there definitely is a fire. □

[3] Sovereign bodies are the President, Parliament, the Government, Council of the Revolution and courts. The Council of the Revolution is a military body set up at the height of the Revolution and which constitutionally has a consultative and watchdog role. The right wing has always wanted to abolish it.

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The Writer: commitment and alignment

Raymond Williams

Some people, when they see an idea, think the first thing to do is to argue about it. But while this passes the time and has the advantage of keeping them warm it has little else to recommend it. If there is one thing we should have learned from the Marxist tradition it is that ideas are always representations of things people are actually doing or feel themselves prevented from doing. So that the first way to look at the idea of commitment is not as at some general notion about which we can at once argue, citing this or that historical case, but rather to see why the notion of commitment was developed and against what alternative ideas it was directed.

In fact the matters at issue have been discussed in many terms. Commitment became the normal term, in our own time, because of the famous intervention by Jean-Paul Sartre at the end of the war when he wrote:

> 'If literature is not everything it is worth nothing. This is what I mean by "commitment". It wilts if it is reduced to innocence or to songs. If a written sentence does not reverberate at every level of man and society then it makes no sense. What is the literature of an epoch, but the epoch appropriated by its literature?'[1]

It was in this sense that a long standing argument was concentrated around the notion of commitment. But immediately with a certain difficulty. First that Sartre, quite wrongly in my view, said that this should only apply to prose, that poetry was something else. But it is very difficult to argue this case for one kind of writing in ways that make it clear why you should exclude the same demands on another kind of writing. The distinction between prose and poetry that Sartre tried to make confused the argument from the beginning. Second, and much more seriously, the unstated background of Sartre's intervention was a very specific historical and political context. It was within the climate of the Resistance. It was moreover at a time of real possibilities of significant movement, in France as in other parts of Western Europe, towards a new kind of democracy. The engagement of intellectuals of all kinds, and especially writers, in those great collective movements which had come from anti-fascist war and resistance, had an immediate, concentrated and urgent social resonance. On the other hand in England, by the time the idea had taken its usual inordinate time to cross the Channel (because that must be one of the longest cultural journeys in existence by comparison with the physical distance) it fell into the most difficult times.

The cold war

Then it sounded like, and of course correctly sounded like, a well-known position in the 1930s. The positions of the British Left writers in the 30s, although they were not normally assembled around the term 'commitment', were directed towards the same essential idea. But in the late 40s and early 50s it was another time. It was the beginning of the cold war. There were then three kinds of backlash against the idea.

First, and we should not forget this, a backlash against the cause to which those writers had been committed. This was the time when we had to look at the other face of that generation of the 30s. It is true that many of the best had died in Spain or in the general European War. But we had also the beginning of that extraordinary and terrible period in which one writer after another from the 30s renounced what he had then believed in, and explained in what was meant to be a charming and pathetic — anyway an apologetic — manner how he had been taken in or fooled or something of that kind. There were some writers who didn't move in this way but their views tended to be less publicised. By the early 50s you could line up a whole series of writers who said 'Yes, of course, I was like that in my foolish youth, but now I know better.' And from that it was no distance at all to saying that writers should keep out of that kind of political and especially left-political thing. That was the first reason why the argument got off to a very bad start after the war.

Second, there was one very severe problem that ought to be intellectually distinguished from this but of course was not. For there were phases, including the Stalin phase, in the Soviet Union, when the notion of commitment could easily be related to the practice of an authority above the writer which was telling him what to write and how to write. 'We know what you mean by commitment. You don't want to be a real writer, you want yourself and others to be party hacks.' And the fact that some — too many — real historical instances could be quoted to support this made clarity very difficult to sustain.

Yet at its best this was always a dispute *inside* the socialist movement. There is still no better statement on this whole matter than that of Brecht, a communist writer, in the 1930s, replying to an article by the Hungarian Marxist then in Moscow, George Lukács. Brecht said of that whole tendency:

> 'They are, to put it bluntly, enemies of production. Production makes them uncomfortable. You never know where you are with production; production is unforeseeable. You never know what is going to come out. And they themselves don't want to produce. They want to play the *apparatchik* and exercise control over other people. Every one of their criticisms contains a threat.'[2]

So there was a principled position, inside the socialist movement, which could enable a totally committed writer like Brecht to make the necessary distinction between a commitment to production linked to a cause, and on the other hand subservience to some version of desirable production arbitrarily decided by a party and its ideologists. This remains a crucial distinction, but it was very difficult to sustain it in the period of cold war and that mood of confession of errors which was weakening the confidence of a whole generation of writers. In practice the two very different ideas — of commitment and of subservience — were pushed together and seemed to support each other.

Good writing

Third, there was a certain backlash among those few Left writers who kept their heads through this difficult period. And it was an intensely difficult period, because it was so complex. There was an understandable wariness of what can quite properly be called opportunism. This, then as now, was not the reality of commitment but a careerist version of it. Commitment still meant, at its best, taking social reality, historical reality, the development of social and historical reality, as the centres of attention, and then finding some of

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the hundreds of ways in which all those processes can be written. On the other hand, at its worst, it could be a superficial kind of writing which took care to include the political references that went with the cry of the moment. If we want an authority on this we have in one of his grumpier moods no less an authority than Engels, who said:

> 'It became more and more the habit, particularly of the inferior sorts of *literati*, to make up for the want of cleverness in their productions by political allusions which were sure to attract attention. Poetry, novels, reviews, the drama, every literary production teemed with what was called "tendency".'[3]

This was only a few years after Marx had referred to work like that of Eugene Sue as 'the most wretched offal of socialist literature.'[4] And Engels, in an even grumpier mood, thirty years later, talked about 'a worthless fellow who, due to lack of talent, has gone to extremes with tendentious junk to show his convictions, but it is really in order to gain an audience.'[5] Now I don't quote these remarks because we should believe everything Marx or Engels said. In fact, in the later mood, Engels was moving, as in his literary tastes he often did, towards a slightly grumpy bourgeois position rather than necessarily towards a Marxist one. But it is very important, if we are to have honesty on the Left, that we should be quite clear that there is a kind of opportunism which can usurp the idea of commitment, by catching the political cry of the moment whether or not it has any significant reference to the central experience or the integrity of the writing. This is the false commitment of the inserted political reference. It is not what Sartre or anyone else who has taken the idea seriously can mean by commitment.

What kind of commitment?

Anyway this third backlash, this wariness, developed, and in the middle of it one further fact was discovered, one which was memorably expressed by the German Marxist Adorno. He made the point that if you propose commitment you have to recognise that it is what he called 'politically polyvalent'.[6] That is to say, if you ask writers to commit themselves, you can have no certainty at all that they are going to commit themselves to any particular cause. It would have been easier if it had been true that writers of significance could never commit themselves to fascism, or to the most archaic kinds of conservatism, or to the softer kinds of liberalism. But indeed if the idea of commitment is there but undefined, as in the rhetoric it often is, such writers indeed come out, take a position about social reality, engage with political struggle. Indeed this is happening from the Right all the time. Then if that is so, at whatever level it is done, in actual writing or in some more general capacity, there can of course be no guarantee that commitment is intrinsically progressive, as some people had assumed. On its own, that is to say, the usual idea of commitment is bound to be polyvalent. We used to have arguments at the end of the 30s about whether a good writer could be a fascist. It seemed to us then that there was something wrong if that could be so, and some people found themselves in quite extraordinary positions, saying either, 'yes, he is a fascist but then he is not a very good writer', or 'he may be a good writer but of course he is politically naive'. It is better to recognise social reality, which in our own time as in others has produced good and even great reactionary writers, as well as all the others whom we may prefer, for different reasons, to honour and remember.

Those were bad, confused times. Yet it can happen that the bad times teach us as much as the good times. When there is intellectual confusion, when you undergo a great deal of political rhetoric, when you have all sorts of recriminations and divisions inside your own movement, there is still a chance to learn, from within such developments. In the case of a general idea there is a chance to learn what is significant in it and what on the other hand is insignificant or meretricious. And that I think, although people are still nervous of it, is what has been happening in more recent thinking.

Freedom of the artist

There has been a change from the 60s onwards after the end of that confused and frightened period. Actually 'commitment' is still not the word most commonly used because, given that history, there is still a lot of nervousness about it. What we have come to understand, I think, is that commitment was not, for the most part, a positive proposition. It was mainly a response to another position, which had become very general and which it wanted to challenge. This was the position that the artist, by definition, must be a free individual; that to be an artist is to be a free individual. Of course there is a version of commitment which can include that, because if you are a free individual you can choose to commit yourself. This was really what Sartre was saying. But to others such commitment was a cancellation of freedom. How can you commit yourself to anything except the practice of your own heart? Is the artist then not necessarily the very type of the free individual?

Now this is an important general case. And one of the advantages of looking at it within Marxist thought is this, that we can see when the idea of the artist as a free individual arose, and this in turn throws important light on the history of the practice of writing and of its always difficult social relations. For the idea of the artist as the type of the free individual in fact arose in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; that is to say in the period of two very important changes. On the one hand there was the emergence of a new libertarianism in literature, primarily in the romantic movement. On the other hand the conditions of writing and publishing were

Yet it can happen that the bad times teach us as much as the good times

changing in unprecedented ways, which on the one hand gave a new professional independence to successful writers, and on the other hand marginalised certain sectors of writing to such an extent that the possibility of feeling related to and wanted by society — either as a whole or by any part of it — had for that kind of writer been in effect excluded.

Now we should not reduce this development to any one of these three factors. All three are crucial in the developing notion of the free artist. The free artist of the romantic movement was arguing for a kind of freedom which identified itself, in many cases, with the most general human liberation. He was arguing against the tyranny of Church and State, indeed against any authority which tried to dictate to the artist what he should think or write. He was also arguing against the tyranny of artistic rules. There is a standard romantic complaint against what they defined and opposed as classicist imitation: rules of how to write well; rules of what to write about; rules of how any particular subject should be handled; rules which had been taken to a point, at least theoretically, as definitive, so that the test of good writing was the extent to which you showed the qualities of this known craft, with all its rules and its skills. The new claim that a writer must be free to break the rules, must be free to innovate, free to create works as the experience required, whether or not this corresponded with pre-existing notions; that was the important claim

[1] JP Sartre: *Between Existentialism and Marxism*, NLB 1974 pp 13-14.
[2] Quoted in W Benjamin, 'Talking to Brecht', *New Left Review* 77 p55.
[3] Engels, *New York Daily Tribune*, 28 October 1851
[4] *The Holy Family*, cit *Marx and Engels on Literature and Art*, ed Baxandale and Morawski 1973 p119.
[5] Engels, August 1881 cit *Marx and Engels on Literature and Art*, p. 123
[6] TW Adorno 'Commitment' *New Left Review* 1974 pp 87-88.

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of the romantic movement, and it was accompanied by a conscious revolt against any authorities which would try to seize or suppress or discriminate against new writing of such kinds.

Growth of the literary market

On the other hand the literary market which was then becoming more organised had a very curious double-edged effect. If you were a certain kind of novelist, from about the 1830s, you could become a successful professional man in a way that very few writers had been before. And although this was obviously most true for the most successful, still, given the extraordinary expansion of magazine-publications, the cheapening of books and the huge growth of the newspaper and periodical press, the opportunities for a very large number of writers were much wider than those in any preceding period. But of course this was a freedom to go out and compete in that market. So that what came through at this level was the professional ideology of the independent artist, who was defining freedom in this very special sense, that he must be free to compete in the market. In effect he was then taking the market as a definition of his social province, his real social relations. And since society was represented by the market, there could be no question of any other significant social commitments. This is a classic bourgeois definition of freedom.

On the other hand, in other areas of writing, and notably in poetry, the economic situation of writers was moving quite the other way. Certain kinds of writing were marginalised, for the market was replacing earlier systems of patronage, and in the market such writing as poetry was at best a marginal product, at worst quite unwanted. So alongside the newly successful literary professional, claiming his professional freedom but claiming it so that he could enter the market (which would tell him what society wanted) was the unwanted writer, who was soon mythicised as the starving genius. There were indeed some of these, and the starving would-be genius, there were some of them too. But at its worst it became a model of what a serious writer ought to be. You can still find people who think it is something which proves you are a real writer. It was a myth which seemed all the more attractive in this market society in which the leading writers were becoming more and more professionally established solid citizens.

Now we can see what a very complex idea this proposition that the artist must be free is. In one sense who would wish to dissent from it? Who would suppose that we are likely to get better writing if some appointed authority is at the writer's elbow, looking over his shoulder, advising him what to do? It isn't that writers don't benefit from advice; it's that there is an almost insoluble problem of getting the right advice and the right writer together: it is always more likely that you will get the wrong writer with the wrong advice. What we have really to understand is the set of ideas that were being fused in this notion of free independence, which we have really to take apart again if we are to understand the real situation. For the acceptance of the market as the guarantee of freedom is of course largely illusory. Although it is true that, at the point of success, the independent professional writer can operate very freely in the market, becoming himself a seller with a certain real independence, the average writer, and in these conditions these were the great majority, was dependent on the market in ways which were at least as severe and sometimes more severe than the earlier dependence of writers on patrons.

Patronage

Patronage itself had passed through several stages, only some of which were deeply restrictive. In the very earliest forms patronage was an obligation. In feudal society, for example, it was the obligation of a household of a certain dignity to support and to give hospitality, to sustain the livelihood, of artists, poets, painters, musicians. Later there was a different type of patronage, in which courts, households and similar authorities hired writers and artists for specific commissions. In the course of that hiring every complaint came up that was subsequently heard in the market, but in the most favourable conditions there was a certain diversity; that if you ran into trouble with this patron you could take the work to another, as indeed in the early capitalist market. It was not a comfortable situation, it was not a good situation, but it does not necessarily compare unfavourably with the market. There is also another phase of patronage, which didn't depend on monetary exchange at all but was simply the offering of social support, social protection, and where necessary early encouragement. It often happened, of course, that support and protection were only offered to certain kinds of writing, from the notion that this was a good kind of writing to have done. But this was always potentially a *different* calculation — let us leave aside whether it was a better calculation — from what became for the market the single criterion, of whether this writing would *sell*. As the market developed this became and is becoming the only criterion. Indeed we are passing through now the biggest change in the writing and publishing market since the early nineteenth century. The criterion of desirability is the promise to sell, and, increasingly now, to sell *fast*, so that there are no expensive warehousing costs and other accounting considerations. This development set up, within the very conditions which appeared to guarantee freedom to the successful, constraints of a new kind, which however could not be recognised as obstacles to freedom because this was the very competitive area which most writers had sought. A bourgeois writer could not say 'it is the market which is restricting my freedom', because for him the market was his freedom. Yet it has always been clear that the market guides writers, restricts them, pushes them this way and that. It can be a very simple or a very complex process. It is extraordinarily difficult for any of us, as writers, to be honest about it.

New kinds of public support

The situation now, for example, at a very organised late stage of the market, is often this: that you want to write a particular work which happens to be of an inconvenient length, that length being your best estimate of what handling that material would be. You talk to a publisher or an editor about it, and he often says: 'Well, it's a pity about that length. But we've got an idea for a book in one of our series. Surely you can do that *meanwhile*.' And suppose this is, with luck, something which you thought someday you might write, but which you wouldn't have written just then, by the time you have decided to do it — and many people do — it has become what *you* want. Indeed unless you are absolutely ruthless with yourself, ruthless in your examination of your motives and especially your more complex adaptations, these pressured decisions come to take on the plausibility of your natural wishes, of your free development as a

This is a classic bourgeois definition of freedom

writer. And of course people say: 'Why should you be a primadonna?' 'Why shouldn't you write what people want?' Indeed the familiar phrases of commitment come back in the rhetoric of the sharply commercial editor: 'Don't you want to write what people are interested in?' 'What's the point of writing for yourself and a few friends?' So the market comes to seem a definition of social duty, even though, with respect to any who may be present, publishers usually know a good deal less than writers about what people will like to read, as distinct from what they *have* liked. They are at least as often wrong as they are right, but in any case the notion of what people want which has passed through the market comes back as a strange kind of

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freedom. Yet many writers are afraid that if they say 'the market is not really free', then they deny the accessible basis of their own freedom. So what they talk about instead, in relation to freedom, is not of where they are. They talk about other situations, where the constraints are different: where there is state support of writers, for example, but of course not the state's support of all literature, indeed the refusal to publish certain kinds of book, and that is totalitarian. So indeed it often is. We have all to recognise the faults and deformities — sometimes the crimes — of such systems. Most of them are limited by the fact that public support operates only as *state* support; that will have to be changed, by new and more open kinds of procedure. Yet in any case we have also to look at freedom, and at its enemies, where we ourselves are.

Alignment

Now I said at the beginning that it is a mistake, when you see an idea, to go straight into an argument about it. The trouble with most arguments about commitment is that they confuse two pairings. Either they confuse the notion of the artist having his own autonomy, which commitment is held to undermine, with the notion of being ordered by some central authority to do something. Or they confuse both with the idea of professional independence, which has been the historical situation of fortunate writers in our own kind of society. And at that point we have to attempt a further disentangling. I put into the title of this lecture not only the word 'commitment', but also the word 'alignment'. Of course in one weak sense 'alignment' is just another word for 'commitment'. But there is another sense of alignment, which I take very seriously and from which, I think, any serious contemporary argument about commitment must begin.

Marxism, more clearly than any other kind of thinking, has shown us that we are in fact aligned long before we realise that we are aligned. For we are born into a social situation, into social relationships, into a family, all of which have formed what we can later abstract as ourselves as individuals. Much of this formation occurs before we can be conscious of any individuality. Indeed the consciousness of individuality is often the consciousness of all those elements of our formation, yet this can never be complete. The alignments are so deep. They are our normal ways of living in the world, our normal ways of seeing the world. Of course we may become intellectually aware that they are not normal in the sense that they are universal. We come to recognise that other people live differently, were born into different social relationships, see the world differently. Yet still, at certain deep levels — and this matters very much in writing — our own actual alignment is so inseparable from the constitution of our own individuality that to separate them is quite artificial. And then for a writer there is something even more specific, that he is born into a language; that his very medium is something which he will have learned as if it were natural although of course he eventually knows that there are other very different languages. But still it is the medium in which he will work, the medium which he shares with his own people, and which has entered into his own constitution long before he begins to write. To be aligned to and by that language, with some of its deep qualities, is inevitable if he is to write at all. So, born into a social situation with all its specific perspectives, and into a language, the writer begins by being aligned. Yet alignment goes deeper again, into the actual and available forms of writing. When I hear people talk about literature, describing what so-and-so did with that form — how did he handle the short novel? — I often think we should reverse the question and ask, how did the short novel handle him.

Writing and working-class consciousness

Because anyone who has carefully observed his own practice of writing eventually finds that there is a point where, although he is holding the pen or tapping the typewriter, what is being written, while not separate from him, is not only him either, and of course this other force is literary form. Very few if any of us could write at all if certain forms were not available. And then we may be lucky, we may find forms which happen to correspond to our experience. But take the case of the nineteenth-century working-class writers, who wanted to write about their working lives. The most popular form was the novel, but though they had marvellous material that could go into the novel very few of them managed to write good or even any novels. Instead they wrote marvellous autobiographies. Why? Because the form coming down through the religious tradition was of the witness confessing the story of his life, or there was the defence speech at the trial when a man tells the judge who he is and what he has done, or of course other kinds of speech. These oral forms were more accessible, forms centred on 'I', on the single person. The novel with its quite different narrative forms was virtually impenetrable to working-class writers for three or four generations, and there are still many problems in using the received forms for what is, in the end, very different material. Indeed the forms of working-class consciousness are bound to be different from the literary forms of another class, and it is a long struggle to find new and adequate forms.

The content of commitment

Now these are alignments of a deep type, and really I think the most serious case for commitment is that we should commit ourselves far enough to social reality to be conscious of this level of sociality. It means becoming conscious of our own real alignments. This may lead to us confirming them, in some situations. Or it can often lead to changing or shifting or amending them, a more painful process than it sounds. Some of the most publicised cases of 'commitment' are when people shift in this way from one set of beliefs and assumptions to another, and this can involve a quite radical shift in real practice. In fact even when we confirm our deepest alignments, but now very consciously and deliberately, something strange has happened and we feel quite differently committed. Because really to have understood the social pressures on our own thinking, or when we come to that wonderful although at first terrible realisation that what we are thinking is what a lot of other people have thought, that what we are seeing is what a lot of other people have seen, that is an extraordinary experience. We can make this point negatively against all those people who appeal to the freedom of the individual artist within their own isolated terms. It is one of the most surprising things about most of them that they say, 'I only write as a free individual, I only write what I want to write', but in fact what they write is, in majority, already written and what everybody already knows. That of course is an illusion of freedom. But beyond it, under pressure, there is a very high kind of freedom. This is when you are free to choose, or to choose to try to alter, that which is really pressuring you, in your whole social formation, in your understanding of the possibilities of writing.

To be committed to that is nothing whatever to do with submission to anybody. It is the discovery of those social relationships which are in any case there. It is what I think Sartre meant by reverberation, resonance: that active consciousness of those social relationships which include ourselves and our practices. It is never likely to be a convenient discovery, in our kind of world. It permits very little in the way of being immediately signed up for somebody else's market or somebody else's policy. But when it really happens, in the many different ways that are possible, its sound is usually unmistakeable: the sound of that voice which, in speaking as itself, is speaking, necessarily, for more than itself. Whether we find such voices or not, it is worth committing ourselves to the attempt. □

Note: This article was given as the Marx memorial Lecture in March 1980.

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Willy Thompson

SARTRE

Renowned in his day as the most celebrated — and notorious — philosopher in Europe, the obituaries of Jean-Paul Sartre, who died in April, were inclined to portray an extinct volcano, a venerable sage now safely respectable, not least because his active influence had shrunk to vanishing point.

Yet the spontaneous reactions of grief and shock at the news of his death on the part of thousands who knew him only through his writings, the immensity of the funeral procession in Paris, reflect the stature of a thinker whose example as much as his ideas made and continue to make the most profound impression among those who encounter them. Within only the last year two books on his philosophy and politics have appeared in English.

From the mid 1950s, until illness incapacitated him a few years ago, Sartre applied his energies to the enterprise of recasting and reinterpreting Marxist social theory, rectifying its supposed omissions and cleansing the corruptions and accretions it had acquired at the hands of alleged vulgarisers from Engels to the present-day Communist parties. He made the attempt virtually single-handed, wrote and spoke voluminously in its pursuit. In spite of all that he is still best remembered — and rightly so — for an earlier phase in his career as the creator and propagator of the outlook on human consciousness and relationships which came to be termed atheistic existentialism. It was this achievement which made Sartre a world celebrity and assured his place among the century's most eminent philosophers. More remarkable, for an obscure and often difficult writer it brought him an enthusiastic popular following and turned him for a time into a fashionable cult figure both in France and beyond its borders.

When the nature of his work during this phase is considered, it is not too difficult to understand why it should have been so. From the time he began to write in the years before the war until twenty years later, Sartre reflected and expressed the dilemmas, anxieties and uncertainties of educated, questioning individuals — and the term 'individuals' is stressed — trying to orientate their lives and their personal commitments in a world of wars, revolution, imperialism, stalinism and latterly, threatened nuclear catastrophe. Such people compose a significant social group in most countries, especially economically advanced ones, and for them Sartre's original philosophy could light up their personal predicaments in a penetrating and challenging fashion, all the more so as he did not initially prescribe particular courses of action but rather a manner of responding to situations. It may be argued additionally, and I would do so, that the essential elements of these theories as well as fitting in admirably with a certain social mood are also true descriptions of some important aspects of human reality.

It is because Sartre was Sartre, in other words, because of the reputation he acquired as an existentialist philosopher, novelist and dramatist that his reformulations of Marxism have evoked widespread interest and commentary. In spite of the greatly enhanced status of theoretical Marxism in western Europe during the last two decades, there can be no doubt that if Sartre had commenced his intellectual career at the point that he began to engage with Marxism, then his impact would have been very limited.

Continuity

A continuity runs through Sartre's thinking and his later positions were meaningful, though not inevitable, projections of his earlier ones. The outlook implied in individualistic existentialism induced him to become a political polemicist and as the cold war thickened, to draw close to the labour movement, Communist parties and socialist bloc. This forms the opening and, I am convinced, the most significant and fruitful section of his intellectual journey. Nonetheless, he never abandoned his previous concepts and dissatisfaction with what he saw as the arthritic and mechanistic version of Marxism upheld by the French Communist Party led him on to a project of restatement and renewal with a doctrine of revolutionary spontaneity at its core. Upon the upheavals of May 1968 Sartre denounced what he saw as the betrayal by the PCF of the revolutionary potential embodied in the leftist student militants, which he believed might, had other choices been made, have fired the working class to seize power.

Subsequently his political attachments were to ultra-left groupings, principally the Maoists, although he remained too sensible to take the Chairman and great helmsman at his own immoderate valuation.

Sartre's writing prior to 1945 is probably best characterised as philosophical psychology (he himself called it phenomenological ontology). Its foundation is an account of how consciousness functions, indeed how it *must* function according to the logic of its being. The formulation here is defective however, for it implies that consciousness is some kind of a thing, while Sartre's exposition is founded on the insistence that it is not. Consciousness, he asserts, is always consciousness *of* something, of some material reality either present or in imagination. Consciousness has no reality apart from its contents — strictly speaking it is nothingness — the nothingness which gives the title to his major philosophical treatise published in 1943, *Being and Nothingness*.

It was this achievement which made Sartre a world celebrity

Consciousness

How then is consciousness distinguished from its objects? By the fact that it is freedom that its mode of existence is perpetually choosing. Consciousness is always consciousness of something and the nothingness of consciousness chooses and cannot avoid choosing what

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that something is to be. To imagine otherwise is self-deception, impelled by the fear which that unqualified freedom evokes. If as an individual I claim that my personality, attitudes and actions are the products of circumstances and not my responsibility, then I am indulging in what Sartre terms bad faith, for in reality I freely chose them. External circumstances can compel my physical body but not my thinking, and if I can think freely I can act in any way I choose up to the point of physical constraints.

The point being made is not affected by the nature of the reality I confront. Let us suppose for argument that God exists, that he has promulgated certain moral imperatives and that he will mercilessly punish anybody who violates them. That may well terrify me into keeping his commandments, but they do not become *moral* laws for me unless I freely choose to regard them as such. If I obey only out of fear they are nothing but arbitary commands and prohibitions without any internal force.

Sartre's argument does not proceed by way of logical demonstration — which is not to say that it is in any manner irrational or mystical. Rather he describes situations and mental states in such a fashion as to convince the reader that consciousness can only operate in the way he claims it does. The famous illustration of nothingness in the form of absence refers to the disappointed expectation involved in not finding an anticipated face: 'To say that Pierre is not in the cafe is not the same thing as to say that Wellington is not in the cafe' — although the statements have precisely the same logical weight.

It might be reasonably objected that to insist as the earlier Sartre does on the unconditional freedom of every individual is a gross distortion of reality. People's behaviour is determined by a range of observable conditions; age, sex, nationality, social class, to name only a few. For a Marxist the principle looks like a flat denial of historical materialism. Such an objection, though perfectly valid in itself, misses the point, for Sartre was not undertaking a sociological investigation but exploring subjective experience. If I am brought up as a working class child I will, to be sure, be likely to choose certain modes of behaviour rather than others, but I do choose them. If I travel daily to the workplace it is because I choose not to be voluntarily unemployed and if I become unemployed in any case I can choose either resignation or struggle. I can, if I am a worker, choose to follow in the footsteps either of Harry Pollit or John Boyd, and nothing in my previous biography will determine it one way or the other.

These are the kind of themes which pervade Sartre's earlier work. His outstanding prewar publication was the novel *Nausea*, an imaginative masterpiece in which the narrator is compelled to recognise the contingency of physical objects and human relations, ie, that there is no external or divine necessity which compels things to be the way they are, they could equally well have been different. The statement that 'life is messy' is to be taken literally, the coherence and acceptability we impose upon it are fabricated by our own consciousnesses and, as the narrator accepts at the end, through our undetermined choice.

Commitment

Up to and including *Being and Nothingness* Sartre's writings had no obvious political resonance. The only positive value which could be deduced from them was that of 'authenticity', the conscious acceptance that what we are is what we have freely chosen to be. The inconclusively terminated novel sequence *Roads to Freedom* reflected his dissatisfaction with that position and the experience and solidarity of the war, a prisoner-of-war camp and the resistance introduced another concept into his philosophical framework, that of commitment. He reasoned that the commitment to freedom implicit in the nature of consciousness demanded that the potential for free choice be maximised, and that in turn implied a socialist programme and an imperative upon socially aware individuals to promote it. Such commitment should be made without illusions, and that involved recognising the historical necessity of the Communist parties as the only effective vehicles of socialism, but in full awareness of their imperfections — an attitude not appreciated immediately by the French Communist Party.

The argument was pursued through the journal which Sartre was instrumental in founding, *Les Temps Modernes*, and a remarkable range of imaginative works centred on the theatre, culminating in *The Prisoners of Altona*, his allegorical condemnation of French torturers in Algeria and the society which produced them.

The charge that Jean-Paul Sartre was a petty-bourgeois intellectual was one he never denied, and such people formed his principal audience. But the criticism implied in such a definition is misjudged and inappropriate. Sartre at this period was well aware that he had neither the background or the standing to address the working class directly on the issues of most concern to it. Attempts by him to do so after 1968 turned out as fiascos. To campaign energetically among the progressive elements of the educated classes for their support to peace and socialism is a perfectly valid activity and what Sartre did up to 1956.

His later development, though still exemplary in the strength of his determination to go wherever the pursuit of truth took him, moved in a direction where his brilliant insights into subjective experience no longer sustained his argument. This is not to say that there are not extremely suggestive notions in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960), the most 'Marxist' of his publications. The discussion of the progress of revolutionary bodies from spontaneity to internal coercive measures intended to preserve the organisation, followed by

Sartre would certainly have liked that

bureaucratic hardening, is certainly one which Marxists have to confront. The objective of significantly advancing Marxist theory however, is vitiated by the derivation of all class relationships and alienation in general from the notion of material 'scarcity'. Either this is factually mistaken so far as capitalism is concerned whose characteristic crisis is of overproduction and destruction of productive potential; or else — as Sartre tends to do — 'scarcity' is redefined and stretched so broadly (eg, scarcity of markets) that it becomes useless as an explanatory concept.

Political interventions

Sartre detested his status as a public monument, both out of personal good taste and on principle that such attribution limited both the freedom of the celebrity insofar as he was tempted to act up his reputation, and also of his audience, who acquired expectations which made them incapable of recognising the spontaneity and freedom of their hero. Very sensibly though, since he couldn't avoid it, he employed it for worthy ends; refusing the Nobel prize, putting his prestige at the disposal of the Russell tribunal on US war crimes in Vietnam and, in the 1970s, exercising it to defend radical publications (albeit of ultra-leftists) against state persecution.

In his closing years Sartre's political actions were sometimes bizarre, occasionally ridiculous. Yet even then they grew out of what will probably be regarded as his most significant legacy to contemporaries and the future — uncompromising honesty in all personal and political relations — principles which he both propounded and lived by. If existentialism appears passé today it is more because its key insights have become a taken-for-granted part of general culture than because it was ever refuted or discredited.

According to one obituary he died 'alone, in eclipse, without public suspense or fanfare.' Sartre would certainly have liked that. □

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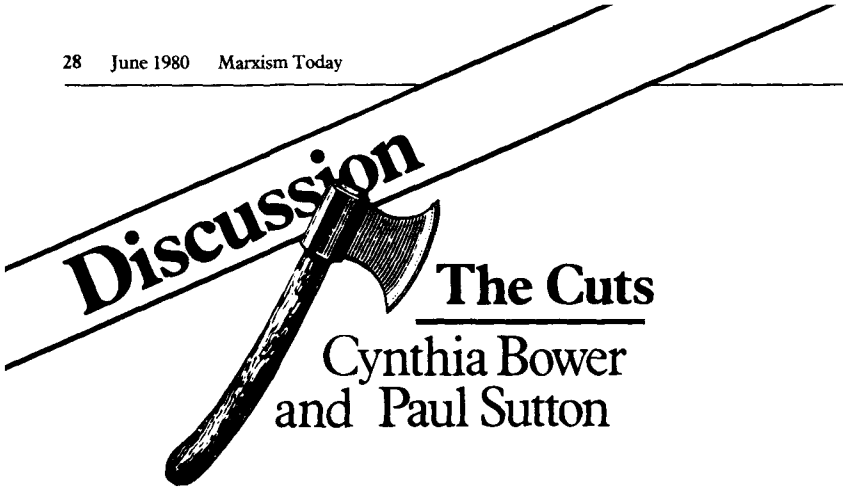

The Cuts

Cynthia Bower and Paul Sutton

To those who work in the public sector, it was encouraging to see such large contingents of industrial workers at the national Lobby against the cuts on November 28th last year. Many of us had been to previous demonstrations in 1976 and 77, and never before had we felt the support of such workers. Dave Priscott's article (*Marxism Today* February 1980) shows how this support was won by a campaign amongst industrial workers in South Yorkshire; his contribution should be welcomed, yet we have serious reservations about this strategy.

Priscott's article describes the tactics which were used to win over large sections of the industrial working class to the idea of taking industrial action against the cuts. These tactics were located within a strategy which sees the cuts as one of several attacks by the Thatcher government against working people, and conceives the struggle against the cuts being led and directed by the organised working class through industrial action and demonstrations.

> It will remain the case that the key to defeating Tory policies is determined action by the organised industrial working class, *backed up by* the broader community' (our italics).

Dave Priscott is quite uncompromising about this. He describes the 'organised roots in industry and the Labour movement' being of 'supreme importance', and offers the South Yorkshire experience as a definitive example. Whilst we welcome the tactical intervention of industrial workers in the struggle over the cuts, we will argue in this contribution that a strategy based squarely on this foundation, takes no account of the nature of Welfare State Services and the way they are experienced, and will therefore be likely to fail. It does not address itself to the politics of the Welfare State and therefore ignores its contradictions and the divisions which it fosters. Above all it will fail to create the alliances necessary to defeat an assault on progressive parts of the Welfare State.

Our criticisms are based not on what Priscott says, therefore, but what he fails to say. The splendid campaign he describes is not specific — that is, those tactics could have been used to mobilise industrial workers against any aspect of repressive Thatcherism. They imply nothing about the cuts, and we believe that a cuts campaign does need particular analysis and as a consequence, a qualitatively different strategy.

Contradictions in the Welfare State

Priscott's article assumes that the state is benevolently neutral in its provision of welfare services — that consumers recognise the benefits of services immediately and intimately, and are therefore able to respond from their class position to threats to such services. The reality is of course very different. All of us consume the services of the Welfare State, whether in the form of council housing, refuse collection or the National Health Service. All of us use the services offered by nationalised industries — electricity, gas or BL. Yet an analysis of the way in which these services are *experienced* both by providers and consumers immediately reveals deep contradictions which lie at the heart of the Welfare State. For example, local authority housing departments are felt to be repressive bureaucracies by many tenants, hospital treatment is frequently insensitive and depersonalised, and nationalised industries are felt to be inefficient and responsible for many thousands of redundancies. Any attempt to defend them in their present form is a kind of fetishism into which the Labour Right so often lapses — 'It's council housing, so it must be good'. The deep reservoir of potential antipathy towards public services within working people was successfully harnessed last winter during the so-called 'Winter of Discontent' disputes over council and hospital workers' pay. This is no accident. The history of the Welfare State is full of contradictions and was born of a struggle between the needs of working people and the exploitative relations of capitalist production. In short, the Welfare State is not definitively 'ours', though for more than twenty years the Left on the whole has behaved as if it is. Any opposition to the cuts based on slogans of 'No cuts' inherently denies this analysis, pays no regard to history, and will have a very limited appeal. We would like to illustrate this by using the example of South Yorkshire: Priscott's article mentions the pride felt by some Labour councillors in Sheffield in their services, and cites public transport and housing as two key issues. Roy Hattersley used to be Chairman of Sheffield's Housing Committee, and it was during his term of office that the notorious Hyde Park Flats were conceived. The thousands of tenants in these blocks are not going to spring to the defence of such items of public expenditure, conceived by a committee chairman whose view of politics was: 'We ran the city with fists of stainless steel . . . We took all the committee chairmanships . . . any councillor who sought, without approval, to alter philosophy, proposal or punctuation was automatically disciplined.' A reliance on past achievements is not enough, even in Sheffield . . . This failure to analyse the nature of the Welfare State and the way it is experienced leads directly to our reservations about the South Yorkshire experience as a general model. The strategy fails to mobilise the crucial sections of the community against the cuts by an almost exclusive reliance on the strength of industrial workers who are somehow seen as 'more advanced' by virtue of being 'organised'.

> 'The general conception was to bring a whole community into action against the cuts, with its best organised and most militant workers as the spearhead.'

Involving the community

It is unfortunate that (in the article at least), only a tokenistic nod is made in the direction of 'the community', and this is tellingly revealed in the passage describing the outcome of the Sheffield rally:

> '*From this high point the message was taken back* into the factories and pits, to the local authority employees, to the local communities and into the colleges and universities, to win support for the November 28th lobby.' (our italics)

Later, Priscott admits that the campaign experienced difficulties in involving community organisations, but only partly explains them by describing opposition from Labour and Communist Party members. We would suggest that these difficulties arose precisely as a result of the South Yorkshire strategy. Firstly, the strategy is based on mobilising the industrial working class, and assumes (against much evidence from NUPE and NALGO for example) that public sector workers have an exclusive concern over job security, and less concern over services. Secondly, it is based entirely on demonstrations and rallies, and says nothing about the role of workers working *within* the state to defend and transform services. This

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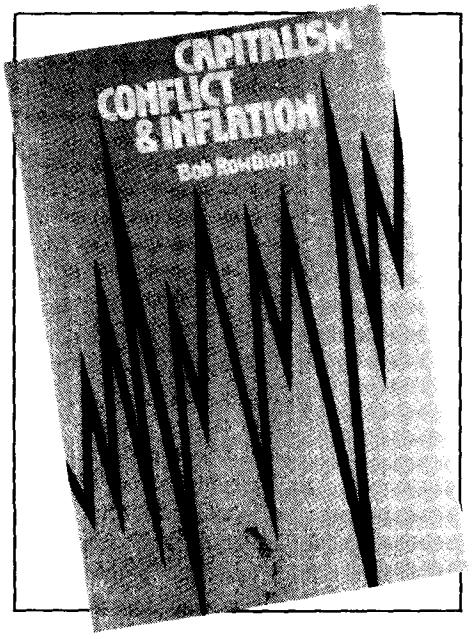
over-reliance on street politics places many thousands of recipients of Welfare State services outside the ambit of the strategy; for example by turning away from the possibility of alliances with the unemployed and others dependent on state benefits which are also threatened by the cuts. Thirdly, the South Yorkshire strategy does not take account of the position of women, who are probably the greatest potential force to be mobilised against Tory policies. Women are massively and intensely involved in working within the Welfare State: they make up two-thirds of NUPE's membership, and half of NALGO's, and together comprise nearly a million, often very low paid public sector workers. Women who are unemployed are in many ways far more dependent on the services *offered* by the Welfare State than are men, and it is women who often stay at home all day in poorly designed and constructed council housing, who often have to manage on insufficient state benefits, and who suffer most during periods of industrial action within both the public and the private sector. The South Yorkshire strategy offers no possibility of uniting with women unless they attend the demonstrations. Lastly, the strategy restricts itself to defending those services already in existence, but it should not be forgotten that the cuts also imply that those services which have never been systematically provided by the state now begin to recede into the distant future. Again it is frequently women who are at the receiving end of non-provisions, and are forced to stay at home to care for children, aged relatives and the handicapped.

The most effective local campaigns against the cuts have been those which have recognised the contradictions in the Welfare State, and in defending services have also sought to transform them, rendering them more democratic and responsive to the needs of both consumers and providers. What is needed now is to translate these localised experiences into a national campaign, which challenges the divisions which are fostered by the Right in order to hinder our struggles. The transformation of public services cannot be postponed until they have been saved, because without this transformation, they will not survive intact. This means that in the struggle over the Welfare State, the left has to conduct campaigns which seek to overcome the traditional splits between what is political (militant male trade union activity in factories) and what is personal (damp seeping through kitchen walls), between work (where you fight back) and home (where you don't), between trade union struggles and community struggles. The South Yorkshire strategy unfortunately does not meet these requirements but simply asks everyone to line up behind industrial trade unionists under the slogan 'No Cuts'.

Reviews

CAPITALISM, CONFLICT AND INFLATION
Bob Rowthorn
Lawrence and Wishart 274 pp £8.50.

The essays collected in this volume form the basis of Bob Rowthorn's justly deserved reputation as the most original of the generation of Marxist economists which emerged in Britain in the sixties and early seventies. Bob Rowthorn says that the common thread to the theoretical and empirical papers is 'their emphasis on the importance of power and conflict in capitalist societies'. Perhaps more significantly they represent a major contribution to the attempt to develop Marxist economics as a way of understanding the present. This involves a critique both of the recent critics of Marxism (notably the Sraffans) and of the fundamentalist Marxists (for example, Ernest Mandel).



'Neo-classicism, neo-Ricardianism and Marxism' (which in fact was first published in the *Bulletin* of the Conference of Socialist Economists in 1972/3, not in the *New Left Review* in 1974) is a classic statement of the positive distinguishing features of Marxist economics. The fundamental point then is that the 'Neo-Ricardians' are guilty of precisely the same failure to analyse the social aspects of the production process as are the neo-classicals. What is rather tantalising is that Bob Rowthorn has not added a postscript stating his position on the neo-Ricardian critique of Marx, as exemplified by Ian Steedman's recent book *Marx after Sraffa*. All Bob Rowthorn says in the introduction is that 'some of Sraffa's followers, such as Ian Steedman, have since accepted this criticism and have extended their analysis to take these social aspects into account'! Now they certainly say they have done this, but the crucial question is the extent to which this can adequately be done while jettisoning a labour-based value theory as Ian Steedman does. Bob Rowthorn clearly still uses a value theory framework for at least some purposes. The Steedman critique has had a definite impact and it is a shame that Bob Rowthorn's position is not made clear.

Apart from a rather slight piece on Rosa Luxemburg and Militarism the other three theoretical essays are concerned with wages. 'Skilled Labour in the Marxist System' is a most original piece which shows how labour employed in the state educational sector contributes to the surplus value appropriated by the capitalists. It is no exaggeration to say that this approach opened up a whole new way of analysing much of the state sector, and one which is only just being exploited by Ian Gough and others.

A long, and previously unpublished essay on Marx's theory of wages is mainly aimed at clarifying Marx's own, sometimes contradictory, writing on the subject.

Three points which emerge from this piece are used in Rowthorn's own very important analysis of inflation presented in a technical way in 'Conflict, Inflation and Money' and non-technically in 'Inflation and Crisis'. These are that trade unions modify but do not abolish the influence of the reserve army of labour on wages (a point denied by the Cambridge neo-Keynesians like Godley); that even though Marx gave a simple and unambiguous definition of the value of labour power, his various attempts all embody the idea that at any time there is a minimum standard of life which capital must provide for workers and their families, and unless it does so there will be very serious economic and political consequences and that in a situation of unconvertible paper money Marx's argument (accepted by many of the

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orthodox) that money wage increases cannot be passed on in higher prices is incorrect since the state may respond to wage pressure by expanding the money supply. He develops a conflict theory of inflation, based on inconsistent aspirations of workers and capitalists for living standards and profit rates. A certain level of unemployment, which results when the state is forced to terminate its loose money policy for fear of the consequences of accelerating inflation, is actually necessary to the capitalist system as the discipline which reduces the workers' pretensions — the natural rate of unemployment beloved by the monetarists in reality means precisely this. Rowthorn says in his introduction that left-Keynesians objected to his suggestion that monetary policy may provide an effective instrument of demand management. Would they still object with Thatcherism seeking precisely to discipline the trade unions with monetary policy?

Bob Rowthorn's own analysis of the world economic crisis is presented in his review of Ernest Mandel's *Late Capitalism*. Rowthorn's analysis of the profits squeeze is of particular interest. The underlying factor he sees as the drying up of the reserve army which increased the strength of the working class in demanding both more social spending and higher wages, especially to compensate for taxes levied on them to pay for the social spending and the price increases when import costs rocketed in 1972-74. But faster money wage increases just bring inflation provided the state expands its spending and the money supply correspondingly. Rowthorn argues that the profits squeeze derives primarily from the fact that governments were forced, for fear of the consequences of hyperinflation, to put the brakes on demand, thus restricting capitalists' ability to pass on the wage increases. This is really a stagnation theory of the profit squeeze; stagnation deliberately induced for fear of inflation. Whilst this undoubtedly reflects what transpired *after* 1973 I personally doubt it was the main factor behind the generalised profits squeeze *before* 1973. It seems to me that labour shortage *itself* is the main explanation; competition between capitalists for labour forced up *real*, and not just money, wages, this increase in real wages being necessary to knock out the least productive capitals and allow labour to be transferred to the more productive.

In considering Mandel's argument about the third technological revolution, Rowthorn quite correctly stresses that the possibilities for continued technical progress are by no means exhausted, given the right restructuring of capital; it is interesting that a major problem he does identify — the difficulty of increasing service sector productivity — is itself more problematic in the era of microchips.

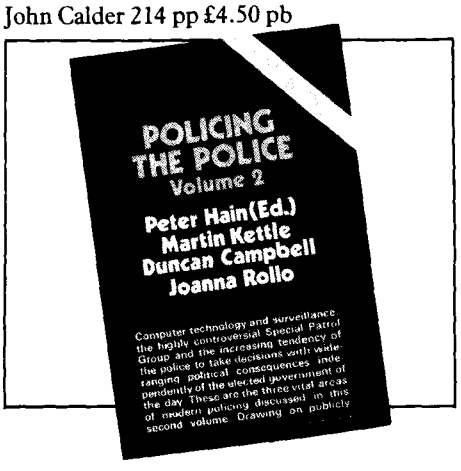
It is disappointing that the book contains no detailed analysis of the crisis of the UK economy. One strange argument he does advance is that it was the working class's lack of militancy in the fifties and sixties which allowed the ruling class to get away with its suicidal policy of imperial pretensions and low investment. He says that a more militant approach by hastening the crisis would have led to a much more positive state policy of intervention. This seems an extraordinary argument. Undoubtedly working class power was already a major factor *inhibiting* the capitalists in the fifties and early sixties; Japanese capitalists did not require pressure from militant workers to accumulate and modernise; indeed their great boom was based on a work force whose organisations were smashed in the late forties. Surely an even more militant trade union movement would have provoked an even earlier turn to all-out Thatcherism.

Bob Rowthorn quite correctly stresses that economic militancy is not enough, and must be sustained by a political programme. But is the alternative economic strategy (AES) really capable of bringing 'certain material benefits to the working class' since by 'challenging the undisputed authority of capital (it) would destabilise the political situation and lead to demands for further change' (p. 145)? Again, it is a shame that there is no thorough discussion of the AES. It is interesting that in an earlier (1974) pamphlet to which he contributed a section (reprinted here) on the UK's international role he says that 'in order to exercise effective control over the economy and because of foreign pressure for liquidation, a left government would be compelled to nationalise wide sections of the city and industry' (p. 84). Surely this is closer to a demand to nationalise the 200 major monopolies than the AES's modest 20-25! The same pamphlet argues that foreign capitalist opposition to a socialist Britain could be divided by an intelligent policy of offering tangible benefits to co-operation: 'if Britain offered compensation for property taken over and proposed reasonable trade deals, most capitalist countries would have strong reasons for co-operating.' This seems highly optimistic. The fear that the contagion of socialism would spread would surely dictate outright hostility from foreign capitalists which could only be counteracted by working-class solidarity. This would hardly be helped by selling off UK assets overseas to their bosses.

Two final points. Whilst his range of interests in the seventies makes an excellent collection of essays, I hope Bob Rowthorn's output in the eighties will include more sustained work on the UK and world crisis and socialist strategies. Lastly, if Milton Friedman's latest book is published simultaneously in paperback and hardback so should Bob Rowthorn's. £8-50 is a lot to pay for a book, especially such an important one.

Andrew Glyn

POLICING THE POLICE VOLUME 2
Peter Hain (ed.)
John Calder 214 pp £4.50 pb



Investigative reporting on the police is becoming a journalistic growth area. The bi-monthly *State Research* bulletin is a regular source of vital information about the work of the police and security agencies, and *Time Out*, *New Statesman* and *New Society* provide frequent outlets for reports by Duncan Campbell, Rob Rohrer, Martin Kettle and others who have monitored the use (and abuse) of increasing police power and the insidious politicisation of police forces. The first volume of *Policing the Police*, edited by Peter Hain last year, provided an extremely useful and thorough critical evaluation by Derek Humphery of the Police Act of 1976 (which instituted for the first time a form of independent review of complaints against the police), and of the 1974 and 1976 Prevention of Terrorism Acts (by Brian Rose-Smith). This new volume contains three important articles, by Martin Kettle (of *New Society*) on the politics of policing, by Duncan Campbell (of the *New Statesman*) on the growing sophistication and capacity of surveillance techniques, and by Joanna Rollo (of *Socialist Worker*) on the Special Patrol Group. Altogether the book is an extremely valuable and timely compendium of recent developments in state control, which deserves wide attention and debate. It provides a useful, updating complement to Tony Bunyan's earlier path-breaking 1976

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study of the state's repressive agencies in *The Political Police in Britain*.

Martin Kettle describes the growing political involvement of the police over the last few years. This has taken two major directions. First, the police have emerged as a vocal and influential pressure group, seeking to alter the laws they are required to enforce and the social context within which they operate. The starting signal for this process was Robert Mark's famous Dimbleby TV lecture of 1973 in which he argued for greater police powers and reduced suspects' rights on the somewhat disingenuous grounds that failure to grant these 'will increase the pressures on the police to use arbitrary methods.' Since then several other police chiefs, notably David McNee, James Anderton, and John Alderson, have followed Mark's footsteps in becoming media superstars. The Police Federation, the rank-and-file representative body, has since 1975 been engaged in a 'law-and-order' campaign aimed to reverse what they see as a liberalising trend in social and penal policy. Alarmed by possible dangers to the image of the police caused by maverick chief constables and the rank-and-file, the Association of Chief Police Officers has itself resolved to adopt a more public stance in future. It has, for example, played a prominent role in trying to restrict the legitimacy of political demonstrations in the recent inquiry by the new parliamentary home affairs sub-committee into public order law.

The second aspect of growing political activity by the police in recent years is their increasing concern with the policing of politics. The specifically political police, the Special Branch, has expanded rapidly in the last decade (although this can only be estimated, for it is only since 1978 that the size of the Branch has been officially disclosed, thanks to persistent questioning by MP Robin Cook). The most disturbing aspect of the branch's work (and of all the other security agencies too) is the virtually complete absence of democratic accountability or even any extensive public disclosure of the nature of their activities. Reports by investigative journalists, accompanied by parliamentary questioning, probably prompted the departure from previous practice in 1979 when about half the chief constables of England and Wales discussed the work of their Special Branches in their Annual Reports for 1978. Unfortunately, the purpose of Special Branch work was almost invariably covered by the vague rubric 'terrorism' and 'subversion'. The elastic range of the latter term was made evident in a parliamentary debate in April 1978 when Merlyn Rees defined it as activities which 'threaten the safety or well being of the State, and are intended to undermine or overthrow parliamentary democracy by political, industrial or violent means.' Clearly this includes much legitimate, democratic political and industrial action. The even greater arbitrariness of the scope of the Branch in practice was indicated earlier by Rees when he delared: 'The Special Branch collects information on those who I think cause problems for the State'. In fact, however, it is unlikely that the Home Secretary exercises anything like as a close a vigilance over the security professionals as this statement implies.

Duncan Campbell's chapter documents the alarming growth in the technological capacity for surveillance available to the police. This underlies the development of a more 'pre-emptive' style of policing, gathering information and intelligence in advance of any specific crime. 'In this pre-emptive view, any citizen, certainly any socially uncharacteristic citizen, is a target for suspicion and observation.' (p. 65) Pre-emptive policing is facilitated by the rapidly growing capacity of the Police National Computer, first adumbrated in 1968. One of the most disturbing aspects of the information included on the PNC, and in other police files, is the extent to which it includes suspicions and 'intelligence' about large numbers of people that do not relate to any actual involvement in crime. Campbell quotes, for example, a bulletin circulated by a provincial force collator (a role established in 1966 in all police forces as part of the Unit Beat system of policing, with the responsibility of being the 'information centre' of the system, collating data from all operational units). This well illustrates the gossipy character of much of the information collected: 'John Smith, a well known local druggy, has moved into 15 New Road together with Ann Brown and child. As we know, Brown is also on the stuff and this new combination should prove interesting. As far as we know Mr Brown is still at home in King Street. It will be interesting to see who visits the new couple.' (p. 131 - names are fictitious).

Joanna Rollo's chapter on the Special Patrol Group usefully assembles what is known about the controversial Metropolitan unit, and its provincial counter parts. It shows how the routine work of the SPG, which is purported to be to relieve hard-pressed police manpower in 'high crime' areas, in effect involves periodic blitzes on mainly black areas using tactics of indiscriminate stop-and-search. This is the basis of some tension between the Group and other local police who claim the heavy-handed tactics of the SPG undermine their relations with the community. Also charted is the transformation of the SPG into a *de facto* specialist riot-squad through more intensive training and regular use in confrontations. The evidence of the Group's brutality on these occasions, and its implication in the murder of Blair Peach, is outlined. The disclosure on March 10th (following an internal Scotland Yard inquiry) that the Group would be reorganised, suggests, despite official disclaimers, that the substance of these accusations has been conceded. Henceforth, officers will only work in the SPG for a maximum of 4 years (which means that about half the present men will be transferred elsewhere) to prevent the development of a gung ho, garrison mentality. The Group will be decentralised into four units, with the intention of facilitating closer links with the local community, and with the consequence that there will be a higher ratio of supervisory officers and closer control.

One problem with the results of this sort of investigative journalism is what are the consequences for political strategy. The police are notoriously sensitive to criticism, and tend to divide the population into those who are pro or anti-police, the latter being dubbed either 'mischievous' or 'misguided'. This paranoid response to outside questioning has recently become so intense in tone that even *The Daily Telegraph* admonished the police for not conceding that there might be justified cause for concern in recent revelations of brutality and malpractice. The danger for the left is not to fall into the opposite trap of being easily labelled and dismissed as anti-police. Peter Hain underlines this in his introduction when he cites the Police Federation magazine's dismissal of his previous volume with the headline 'It's that Hain again!'. As Hain argues, this makes it 'impossible to engage in debate at a level that rises above the mere exchange of slogans'. Hain tries to emphasise that the book is not intended as a blanket criticism or attack on the police, but a questioning of present trends in policy, organisational structure and ideology.

The regular monitoring of police activity accomplished by this kind of investigative reporting has two crucial functions. First, it provides detailed evidence highlighting the need for more adequate constitutional means of democratic accountability, which was the purpose of Jack Straw's recent private members' bill seeking a greater role for elected police authorities. Second, in the absence of such formal channels, the process of detailed investigation and revelation may be the only real means of accountability we have.

Robert Reiner

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NOTES

CUL 80: JULY 5th-13th, 1980

Denis Walshe writes: This year sees the Twelfth Communist University of London. Over the years CUL has grown from an event attracting less than two hundred to one attended by 1,500 people. However, the political situation in which this year's CUL takes place is vastly different from that of previous events.

The character of the Thatcher Government and the nature of its political and ideological attacks places a particular significance on the role of an event such as CUL.

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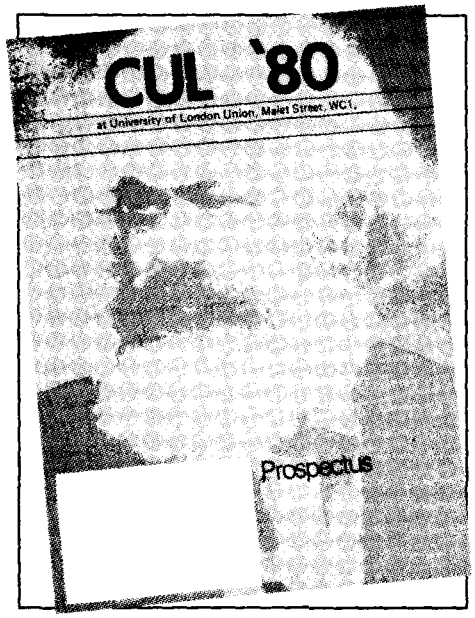

discussions in which Marxist critiques of orthodox academic courses will be made.

There are also a number of new features at CUL 80. Whilst expanding courses of specific interest to those involved in higher education, courses will also be provided for those active in the trade union movement, community struggles and women's movement. New courses include: Community Work, De-industrialisation, Television, Nuclear Power, International Politics — in fact, there are 17 new courses.

A further new development underlining the pluralistic character of CUL is that four journals will be organising their own courses at the event — History Workshop Journal, Feminist Review, State Research and Capital and Class.

The feminist courses at CUL have increased to eight, with another ten courses discussing feminist ideas in one way or another.

Registrations for CUL 80 are going well, with enrolments already in from USA, Japan, France, Holland and Sweden.

Register now. For full-time attendance: £12 waged, £10 unwaged. Part-time — £4 a course. For Prospectus and enrolment form contact The Organiser, CUL 80, 16 King Street, London, WC2, 01-836 2151.

ERROR

A mistake was made in the advertisement for 'The Irish Industrial Revolution' in the May issue of *Marxism Today*. The price is £2.20, and not £2.50 as printed.

Contributions to *Notes* (brief please) are welcome. We need copy before the 1st of the month preceding publication.

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